

# THE INDEPENDENT

No 8245

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WEATHER: Mainly dry

(IR65p) 60p

**Trevor Phillips**  
on the death of  
political loyalties

New column Page 21



**Style spice:**  
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wannabe cool?

the long weekend



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The eye



## Tories say the unthinkable

Anthony Bevis and  
Colin Brown

Tory attempts to create a united front for the election fell apart again yesterday when two former ministers, John Biffen and Edwina Currie, talked openly about the party's prospects after defeat in May.

While the party's most die-hard loyalists assembled for a pre-election Conservative Central Council meeting in Bath, Mrs Currie said that in the event of defeat, John Major should quit the leadership quickly. "Please, John, please, don't hang around. Don't make us wait," she said.

Mr Biffen said the scale of defeat might be so great that all the leading contenders could lose their seats.

The Prime Minister, who will today address the council with a trailblazing speech for the election, replied that those who were worth their salt were fighting for victory. With feeling, Brian Mawhinney, the party chairman, told the council meeting: "If you don't have something to say that will help us win, don't say anything at all."

But, by then, he was too late to stop the two former ministers from the furthest wings of the party - the Euro-sceptic Mr Biffen and the Europhile Mrs Currie - breaking loose.

Speaking of the succession to Mr Major, something the activists in Bath steadfastly refused to do, Mr Biffen said: "It may be that the nature of the defeat is such that many of the obvious candidates for the succession themselves have been defeated."

The party, he said, might have to wait for leadership contenders to get back into the House of Commons through by-elections.

"There are many who feel John Major should remain the leader," he said, "not least to provide a decent period during which the party can consider the claims of the candidates and, as it were, let them use the catwalk to demonstrate their attractiveness and skills."

But Mrs Currie said it would be "disastrous" if Mr Major stayed on for long as Leader of the Opposition. "He would do it for the best of motives but... we ought to have our leadership contest over, clearly and quickly."

As Alan Clark, another former minister, pointed out, if the Conservatives do lose the May election, Mrs Currie would be one of the first to be out of a seat. He dismissed her remarks as a "final fling".

But the party will today want to devote its attention to the leader's speech at Bath, in which Mr Major will make his own "passionate and personal" claim for the centre ground of British politics.

Spinning the content of the speech last night, Conservative sources said Mr Major would speak as someone who had had to struggle against a background of personal adversity in housing, education, employment and neighbourhood, and that he would say that the next government would aim "to make sure that those who don't have, do have".

Mr Major appeared, ready to suggest that he was putting himself above the short term fray for the election prize, with an agenda to build what he will call "a people's Britain" in which all the people, including the have-nots, can share.

That grand and idealistic picture was somewhat tarnished yesterday, however, by an exhorting and deeply personal attack on Tony Blair, the Labour leader, who was portrayed by Dr Mawhinney as an inexperienced, smarmy, grinning and hypocritical Socialist.

The party chairman said the Conservatives would be asking the people to choose between Mr Blair and Mr Major, "between smarm and substance, between grins and grit, between Socialism and success".

Mr Major was facing a growing rebellion from senior Conservative MPs who are taking up the offer from a millionaire businessman Paul Sykes, to give £500,000 to fund



Mug shot: A souvenir of future hope for sale at the Conservative Central Council in Bath yesterday

Photograph: David Rose

their election expenses if they will come out against a single European currency in defiance of the Prime Minister's preferred "wait and see" approach.

David Heathcoat-Amory, the former

Treasury minister, yesterday joined senior Tory Euro-sceptics John Redwood and Norman Lamont, who are expected to accept the offer.

Robin Cook, the shadow Foreign

Secretary, accused senior Tory MPs of accepting "bribes" from the millionaire businessman.

Mr Cook challenged Mr Mawhinney to instruct all Conservative candidates to refuse the money.

"If he will not do so, it is the voters who will treat with contempt a Tory party whose candidates can be bribed to oppose the policies of their own leader."

Leading article, page 19

'If you don't have something to say that will help us to win, then don't say anything at all'

Brian Mawhinney,  
Tory chairman

'It may be that the nature of the defeat is such that many of the obvious candidates for the succession themselves have been defeated'

John Biffen MP

'Please, John, please, don't hang around. Don't make us wait'

Edwina Currie MP

## Broadcasters put dialect on danger list

Ian Burrell

A national survey is to be carried out to document the rich regional diversity of language in Britain before thousands more words of local dialect are lost.

Linguists have identified the spread of "Occupational English", which is classless and devoid of regional accent and vocabulary, breaking down traditional speech patterns.

Researchers from the University of Sheffield have found that this new accent of the workplace is quite distinct and more downmarket from received pronunciation.

At the vanguard of the advance of Occupational English are local radio presenters, who

shun the clipped tones of the BBC, but speak with a similar accent and vocabulary throughout the country.

At the same time, large parts of northern England and Scotland are now adopting the speech mannerisms of the south-east at the expense of their own regional accents.

John Wells, a professor of phonetics at University College London, said people in Manchester, Leeds and even Glasgow were speaking more like Londoners.

Glottal stops (as in "daw-er" for daughter and "war-er" for

### A taste of regional vocabulary

Marrer	(workmate)	North East
Tab	(ear)	South Yorkshire
Sprack	(active child)	Severn estuary
Frit	(afraid)	East Midlands
Spek	(splinter)	North East
Ochin	(hedgehog)	West Midlands
Backend	(autumn)	Northern England
Dap	(bounce)	South Wales
Lake	(to play)	Northern England
Whin	(Gorse)	Lake District

water) and the vocalisation of the L ("milk" instead of milk) are increasingly common in Northern conversation.

Professor Wells, author of the book *Accents of English*, said: "You now get these features not

just in the South-east but in other parts of the country. One exception is Liverpool, which has such a strong accent of its own."

Nationally there are more than 80 expressions for being left-handed, yet "cack-handed",

a term borrowed from the South-east, is now the most commonly used in much of northern England.

In order that words are not lost forever, the University of Sheffield is about to undertake the first national survey of regional English for 40 years which will take a decade to complete.

The survey is being run by Dr Clive Upton and Professor John Widdows, of the university's Centre for English Cultural Tradition and Language, who said many words were being lost.

Prof Widdows said: "What we are seeing is a younger generation's version of standard English, which is much more of a halfway house."

As a pilot for the national survey, researchers are to compile a glossary of Yorkshire dialect, which will mark the 100th anniversary this year of the Yorkshire Dialect Society.

Readers will learn that to be "blethered" after adding your brass "means that you are exhausted after working hard for your money."

"Callifudging" is an old Yorkshire expression for messing about and "manishment" has nothing to do with machismo but is a North Riding term for fertiliser.

### QUICKLY

#### Nomura head resigns

The president of Nomura Securities resigned yesterday, a week after admitting his company made illegal payments to a gangster's family. Pages 14, 22

#### Threat to South West

Stagecoach, which runs South West Trains, faces a £1m fine and ultimately the loss of the £270m business unless it improves its cancellation-hit service. Pages 10

#### Jewish rift grows

The rift between the Orthodox and Reform Jewish communities in Britain deepened yesterday after it was disclosed that the Chief Rabbi, Dr Jonathan Sacks, had accused the late Rabbi Hugo Gryn, a Holocaust survivor, of being a destroyer of Judaism. Pages 12

## Billie-Jo's foster father on murder charge

Jason Bennett  
Crime Correspondent

The foster father of Billie-Jo Jenkins, the 13-year-old girl found bludgeoned to death in her back garden, has been charged with the murder.

Sion Jenkins, 39, a deputy head teacher, has also been charged with dishonestly obtaining his job by lying about his qualifications and his teaching experience.

Billie-Jo was beaten over the head with a metal tent peg and was reported to have been found by one of her four step-sisters and Mr Jenkins at their home in Hastings, East Sussex, on 15 February.

The schoolgirl had been painting the patio doors.

Mr Jenkins was remanded in custody for a week at a special sitting of Hastings Magistrates court yesterday afternoon, 24 hours after being arrested for the second time.

The father of four spoke only to give his name and address during the 30-minute hearing. Smartly dressed in a blazer, blue-and-white checked shirt and fawn trousers, he remained impassive throughout the proceedings, occasionally bowing his head as two charges were read out in court.

Along with being charged with the murder of his foster daughter, he also faces a charge

that between 10 December 1991 and 14 March 1997 he dishonestly obtained for himself employment by deception, namely by falsely representing his academic qualifications and teaching experience.

An application for bail was refused. Soon after the hearing Mr Jenkins was taken to Lewes prison.

He was due to take over as headmaster of the William Parker School, in Hastings, in September, and has been on compassionate leave since the murder.

Mr Jenkins and his wife Lois, 35, a social worker, have been living apart since his initial arrest on 24 February.



Billie Jo: Beaten to death

After the murder, Mr Jenkins and his wife made a public appeal for help to track down

the killer. He told reporters that he had seen a stalker in the back garden and that Billie-Jo and his family had been worried about their safety.

He was arrested for the first time on 24 February and questioned for a day-and-a-half before being released on bail.

Mrs Jenkins returned to live at the house a few days ago after staying with relatives and this morning took her four children to school. Mr and Mrs Jenkins had fostered Billie-Jo for five years and last December became her legal guardians.

Mr Jenkins' solicitor, Brendan Salsbury, said his client "categorically denied" the murder charge.

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## news

## significant shorts

## Lawyers demand Cheshire child sex abuse inquiry

Lawyers acting for 120 victims of child abuse in Cheshire yesterday called for a full public inquiry into Britain's biggest abuse scandal and into persistent allegations of a widespread organised paedophile ring that infiltrated children's homes in the Seventies and Eighties.

The lawyers also warned the Secretary of State for Health, Stephen Dorrell, that they would sue him if he did not order a public inquiry into the scandal that has so far seen 13 men jailed for 110 years, 111 people named as abusers and 534 former residents claiming they were abused while in children's homes in the area.

Peter Garsden, a solicitor co-ordinating the legal actions being taken by a number of firms on behalf of clients, said: "We have had 13 convictions as a result of a police inquiry which began three years ago and there should now be a public inquiry into the most serious paedophile investigation ever carried out in this country. I believe there was a paedophile ring in existence which was as disciplined as the Mafia."

Roger Dobson

## Jail for bouncer who headbutted MP

A bouncer who admitted head-butting an MP and breaking his nose was jailed for 12 months yesterday. Keiron Quinn, 30, had pleaded guilty at an earlier hearing to assaulting Labour MP Ian McCartney and causing him actual bodily harm at Wigan Labour Club last November. Mr McCartney, 45, has campaigned for a national registration scheme for doormen and bouncers.

Sentencing Quinn, who is married with two children, Bolton Crown Court Judge Brian Carter said: "You are not being sentenced by us because it was a Member of Parliament you assaulted. It is our belief that the public would be outraged if you did not go to prison."

## 16th-century gun unearthed

Archaeologists have uncovered one of the largest early guns to be found in Britain. It measures seven-and-a-half feet in length, weighs more than a ton and dates from the reign of Henry VIII (1509-1547).

It was found 20-30 yards from the river Hull at Kingston-upon-Hull on Monday, inside the foundation of a wall in the South Blockhouse, one of three brick fortresses built along the river on Henry VIII's instruction.

## Zoe Evans strangled, inquest told



Murdered schoolgirl Zoe Evans was suffocated to death, an inquest was told yesterday.

The cause of death of the nine-year-old was revealed to the Wiltshire coroner, David Masters, sitting at Salisbury, where he formally opened and adjourned an inquest into her death. The coroner was told her body had been concealed in a bag set after her disappearance from her Pepper Place home at Warminster on January 11. It was revealed by animal activity on the steep side of the Battleshury Hill, a bronze-age site, three quarters of a mile from her home in army married quarters.

The area had previously been searched by Army personnel and police with dogs trained to search and find bodies. The hillside body was formally identified as that of Zoe on Wednesday following extensive forensic tests. Mr Masters was told yesterday that DNA fingerprinting was the technique used in the identification process.

## Rugby boss cleared of libel fraud

The chairman of Wigan Rugby League Football Club, Jack Robinson, 55, was cleared of a charge of attempting to pervert justice by a jury at Bolton Crown Court yesterday after a four-day trial. Mr Robinson was accused of trying to induce an executive of Leeds Rugby League club to supply him with letters purporting to show that a £150,000 player transfer deal had been cancelled following damaging reports in a local weekly newspaper, the *Wigan Observer*.

The letters were to be used in a legal action against the newspaper with the offer that any damages obtained would be shared by the two clubs, alleged Mr Alan Conrad for the prosecution. Mr Robinson, a wholesale antique dealer of Pendlebury Lane, Haigh, Wigan, told the jury he had acted at the behest of Covic's father-in-law, Jack Martin, who was a fellow director of the club. He said he was always confident Mr Davies would reject the proposal out of hand - which he did. He said he only agreed to put the proposal to Mr Davies in order to keep Mr Martin "sweet" and to ensure that Mr Martin would not withdraw a £250,000 loan to the Wigan club which was in financial difficulties at the time.

Peter Greenhalgh

## Jet-set conman must pay £3,000

A businessman who flew all over Europe on charter tickets which he had upgraded to club-class must repay more than £3,000 to British Airways, a judge ruled yesterday. Roger Roberts, 41, was also ordered to pay £4,000 court costs and do 100 hours' community service, after appearing for sentence at Isleworth Crown Court. But he was lucky not to go to prison, said the judge, Recorder Thomas Culver.

Roberts, of Hornchurch, Essex, had been found guilty at an earlier trial on seven specimen charges of using false instruments and seven of obtaining services by deception. He bought the cheapest fixed-date ticket, usually from Going Places, said Ms Parmjit Cheema, for the prosecution. "Then without any authority from the airline... he falsified that ticket by putting on a re-validation sticker which made it look as if this very cheap economy world fare ticket was an open club class ticket which could be used at any time," she said.

## Nursery vouchers scheme

Hammersmith and Fulham council did not take part in the pilots of the nursery vouchers scheme as was reported in Thursday's edition of *The Independent*.

## people



Pain threshold: An injured Mr Clinton is helped from Air Force One on arrival in Washington.

## The battle of wounded knee takes toll on golfing Clinton

It was to be a President's perfect Florida spring break: sunshine, some gentle fundraising, and lots and lots of golf. For Bill Clinton however, it ended in the agony of a torn knee tendon, a premature return home on a wheelchair and the prospect of a month or more on crutches.

The calamity occurred at 1.20 am yesterday, when Mr Clinton stumbled heavily as he was going down some steps on the West Palm Beach estate of Greg Norman, friend and golfing superstar, with whom he played a round during his recent official visit to Australia. The President "felt something go pop," according to his spokesman. He was rushed to a nearby hospital, where he was given painkillers - "non-narcotic," aides quickly noted, mindful of the man who famously once smoked dope... but did not inhale.

After being ferried back to a rainswept Washington on Air Force One mid-morning yesterday, a wincing Mr Clinton was laboriously helped into a black security service van for the short trip to the Naval Hospital in suburban Bethesda, where Presidents traditionally are treated. Surgery to re-attach the tendon to the right thigh bone was scheduled for the afternoon. The prognosis is of full recovery, but not before much inconvenience.

For the operation only local anaesthetic was planned, meaning Mr Clinton would remain conscious, and would not have to temporarily transfer power to Vice President Al Gore, under the 25th amendment of the US Constitution. But he will be using a knee brace and crutches, doctors say, for four to six weeks, and his immediate work schedule is in much doubt.

For the moment at least, the summit with Boris Yeltsin next week is still on, as is Mr Gore's important trip to China later this month. "You bet," was Mr Clinton's reply when asked if he would still be going to Helsinki for what now bodes to be an invalid's reunion.

By the standards of recent presidential state visits, Bethesda, Mr Clinton's is small beer - nothing to compare with Ronald Reagan's colon cancer or near assassination, or George Bush's heart fibrillation in 1991, that fleetingly raised the unnerving spectre of Clinton Quayle in the Oval Office. Even so, this most golf-addicted of Presidents will not be swinging a club for a good while thereafter - be it in Florida, or anywhere else.

Rupert Cornwell, Washington

## Morris goes from the ridiculous to the subliminal

Chris Morris, creator of Channel 4's satire *Brass Eye*, took another swipe at the media's concepts of truth and reality this week - this time by setting himself up.

It was almost certainly Morris (right) who leaked to the press the story of an obscene subliminal message about Channel 4 chief executive Michael Grade, contained in the last episode of the series.

The message, "Grade is a c\*\*\*," was virtually undetectable without sophisticated equipment, and such is the uncertainty that the notorious hoaxer causes at Channel 4 that at first there was even some doubt whether the message had actually been broadcast.

The story of the subliminal message originally surfaced at the beginning of the week in an anonymous fax to a *Time Out* journalist who Morris - famous for never giving on-the-record interviews - had used as a conduit in the past. At the same time, Channel 4's Internet site received an E-mail telling the channel to look for the obscene message.



The story was then picked up by the Sun.

"It has been like this since day one," said the harassed Channel 4 press officer who had to deal with the show. "He weaves reality like a spell and turns everything into ironic media language. The series has finished now but he won't go away, he seems to lurk in the air."

Morris himself doesn't help, refusing to deny or confirm if he was responsible for the message, saying only "I deal in lies." The rationale for the message is supposed to be Morris' ire at Channel 4 pulling a sketch about Yorkshire Ripper Peter Sutcliffe from the final episode.

Paul McCann

## 12-year-old girl to win Oxford place

A 12-year-old girl is a step away from becoming one of Britain's youngest university students. Sufiah Yusoff, from Weston Favell, Northampton, needs to pass one more test in order to begin a mathematics degree at Oxford University.

She is emulating Ruth Lawrence, who became Britain's youngest graduate when she gained a First in mathematics at Oxford in 1985.

And Sufiah could soon be joined by her sister Aisha, 14, and brothers Abbi, 15, and Iskander, 10. They are also well-advanced in mathematics and hope to win places at Oxford next year.

Sufiah has been offered a place at the all-female St Hilda's College providing she gets a grade A in a further mathematics A Level. She has now completed three parts of the examination and will sit the final paper in June. But she has already done so well that achieving a grade A should be a formality. Sufiah achieved a grade A in mathematics last year. Her father Farooq, a research engineer, said the family was planning to move to Oxford to be near Sufiah. "Barring a disaster, she should get a grade A because she's done so well in

## Thailand orders Khashoggi's arrest for fraud

Thailand yesterday issued an arrest warrant for the Saudi Arabian tycoon Adnan Khashoggi, marking a fresh legal tussle for the jet-setting financier who was once one of the world's richest men. Police said they had issued warrants for Khashoggi and four other officials of the Bangkok Bank of Commerce (BBC) on charges of conspiring to defraud the bank.

An officer said the Bank of Thailand requested the warrants for the five on suspicion that they jointly conspired for Khashoggi, 61, to draw two billion baht (\$77.5m) in loans from the BBC, without credible collateral, in 1995. The whereabouts of the globe-trotting businessman are unknown. But his multi-million dollar deals, court cases and elite acquaintances have spread his fame throughout the world.

Khashoggi, whose wealth once totalled \$4bn,

amassed one of the largest personal fortunes in the world by playing middleman in the transfer of Western arms and technology to Arab oil states.

Much of it came from commissions paid in the 1970s by Western corporations that he guided in dealing with an Arab world flush with petrodollars and anxious to modernise.

In 1986, Khashoggi played a key role in initiating contacts between Israel and US officials on the American government's then-secret scheme to sell arms to Iran.

Throughout his career, he has hobnobbed with the high and mighty, entertaining the former US secretary of state, Henry Kissinger, the former head of Chrysler, Lee Iacocca, and King Juan Carlos of Spain on his private yacht.

Reuters, Dubai

## briefing

## SOCIETY

## Crime level nearly twice as high as official statistics

Crime is running at nearly twice the level suggested by official statistics, a survey claims today. Some 44 per cent of crime victims questioned for the survey - conducted by MORI for *Reader's Digest* - admitted that they had failed to report it to the police.

They did not do so because they did not think the police would do anything about it; had no confidence that the criminals would be caught; or because they felt the offences were too trivial.

The survey comes just days before the Home Office publishes the official figures for 1996, which are expected to show the fourth consecutive fall in the total number of offences recorded by police in England and Wales. But despite the falling figures and the tough law and order rhetoric emanating from politicians, almost nine out of 10 people told the survey that their concern about crime had actually increased in recent years.

In a separate study, the cost of car crime is said to have hit its highest level since 1993. The insured cost of theft of and from private cars in 1996 was £494m - up 14 per cent on 1995, said the Association of British Insurers.

## DEFENCE

## Global nuclear stockpile warning

More than 2,000 tonnes of weapons-grade plutonium and uranium are stockpiled in military stores around the world, often with lax controls at both national and international level, say the authors of a book published this week. The majority of this material is surplus to military requirements and cannot be used for other applications. In addition, new reprocessing plants in France and the UK are dramatically increasing the supply of plutonium which could be used in the manufacture of nuclear weapons.

The authors, all nuclear scientists working at a senior level, draw particular attention to the situation in Russia and the former Soviet Union, where controls on the materials are less than stringent. Since just a few kilograms of plutonium are needed to make a bomb, the threat of theft by agents of non-nuclear countries, or terrorists, must be taken seriously, they argue.

*Plutonium and Highly Enriched Uranium 1996: World Inventories, Capabilities and Policies*. Albright, Berkout and Walker, Oxford University Press



## SCIENCE

## Physics books will need rewriting

Cambridge scientists have achieved a major breakthrough which could mean school physics books have to be updated. A century after the electron was discovered, they have created a quantum measure of electrical current - creating another equation,  $I=e\hbar$ , which physics pupils will have to learn.

The achievement is expected to lead to the first standard definition of the charge on a single electron. It also has far-reaching implications for ultra-low power energy sources and self-regulating "smart" computer chips.

The breakthrough was made by physicists in the same Cambridge University laboratory where the electron was discovered by J J Thomson, 100 years ago this month.

Professor Michael Pepper and his team used high frequency soundwaves to trap and drag individual electrons, one by one, through a device called a "split-gate" that concentrates electrons into a narrow stream. The electrons are carried along in the troughs of the wave, emerging at the same frequency.

The team is now trying for the first time to establish a precise standard definition of the charge of a single electron. The method is to measure the current using standard instruments and then divide it by the frequency.

Charles Arthur

## FOOD

## Quest for a high-flying croissant

The UK's lightest, fluffiest, airport croissant can be found in the British Airways passenger lounge at Glasgow Airport. So says the restaurant critic Egon Ronay, in his third annual gastronomic guide to airports, published yesterday. Planet Hollywood, at Gatwick's South Terminal, meanwhile, is judged to have the best atmosphere, as well as the most welcoming and friendly service.

While Mr Ronay's "best chips" award unsurprisingly went to Harry Ramsden's (also at Glasgow), the chain's outlet in Heathrow's Terminal One was applauded for the "most appetising traditional breakfast".

The "most authentic cappuccino" award was jointly won by AMT Espresso at Heathrow's Terminal One and Café Select at Edinburgh. The "tastiest sandwich or baguette" is deemed to be offered by Pret a Manger at Heathrow, while the "best wine by the glass" is at the Noon Indian restaurant, also at Heathrow.

## ARTS

## Would-be MPs focused on film

A survey of General Election candidates' interest in the arts shows that 69.5 per cent choose film and video as their favoured artistic form, 69 per cent choose classical music, 66.5 per cent museums and heritage, and 65 per cent literature. Only 55 per cent named theatre. Less than 40 per cent were interested in pop music, and not even 10 per cent in contemporary dance.

The survey of more than 700 candidates by the National Campaign for the Arts, an independent pressure group, had a response rate of more than 40 per cent. Of these, more than half said they attended an arts event at least once a month.

*Arts News, the journal of the National Campaign for the Arts*. £2.50. Tel: 0171 828 4448

David Lister



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# In the shadow of Satan

Voodoo and other pagan goings-on haunt a small country town that appears to be going to the devil...

Ian Burrell

For more than a year, the people of Lewes, the county town of East Sussex, have feared that they could be living in the shadow of the occult.

Cats had been sacrificed on church steps, a hedgehog with runic death symbols nailed to its body was posted through a letterbox. And a young environmental activist fell from a 300ft cliff after leaving a message saying: "Please God. Somebody save me. Protect me from black magic."

Some locals believed that the medieval town, which has ancient pagan traditions, might have become the home for a Satanist sect similar to that led by Aleister Crowley, who died in Sussex 50 years ago.

But detectives who have investigated the series of sinister



Strange days: Revellers taking part in the Lewes torchlight bonfire procession, which is held every 5 November

Photographs: Andrew Hasson

rituals said that they had stopped after the arrest of a single schoolboy.

This week, at Lewes Magistrates' Court, the youth, who has now turned 17, denied pushing a dead hedgehog through the letterbox of a local woman.

The court heard that eight nails had been used to attach a runic note to the animal. The letters were translated as "Hail Satan. By this rite beware all cursed. So be it." The prosecution was forced to drop the case when a key witness could not identify the defendant.

Next month the youth will be sentenced on four other charges of which he has been convicted, including the theft of a gravestone, possession of a knife, actual bodily harm and the disorderly behaviour of forcing a younger boy to his knees to recite the Lord's Prayer in a graveyard.

Police who visited the youth's home found he had converted the coal-shed of his mother's council house into a black magic shrine. The walls were painted black, and a star and runic circle were marked out on the floor. A cross was hung upside down in the sign of the devil.

At an earlier hearing at Lewes Youth Court, the boy admitted stealing a stone cross gravestone which was found in the shrine. Candelsticks, chalices and priests'

robes were also retrieved.

The people of Lewes are more accustomed than most to pagan ceremony and strange goings-on. Every November, 60,000 people converge on the medieval town to watch its ancient bonfire societies burn effigies of giant pyres. Unlike the bonfires, other recent rituals in Lewes will not be appearing in

particular character." The youth was arrested in July, placed on a 7pm curfew and banned from visiting places of worship. An earlier court hearing heard that he forced a 13-year-old boy to drop to his knees and recite the Lord's Prayer after stopping him while he was skateboarding near St Michael's churchyard.

As the younger boy faltered in his recital, the older youth listened and cracked his knuckles. He said: "I presume you are not religious. That's a good thing. You don't want to get into any of that."

Court officials erected a barrier in front of the youth so that young witnesses could give evidence without having to confront him. Police officers have felt

chilled by his presence. One detective said: "He is probably the wierdest, spookiest person I have ever met in my life. He is very mature in a way that belies his age. I would seriously compare him to Damien in the *Omen* films."

"He scares people who are far, far older than he is. Mature, sensible, intelligent people are petrified of him."

He is the spookiest person I have ever met in my life

tourist guides.

They started just before Christmas 1995 when a vicar found that figures on the children's crib had been smashed. A dead cat on the vestry steps had its throat slit and, two days later, a beheaded cat was dumped in the same spot.

Soon after, at another nearby church, seven stone crosses were smashed and others turned upside down. Around one grave a shallow trench had been dug out and set on fire.

At about this time, Nick Gar-

gani, a 26-year-old who was active in the local Green Party, struck up a friendship with the youth. The pair shared an interest in Tarot cards. One Sunday last April, Mr Gargani visited his girlfriend Luisa Serrechia in a state of distress. He was crying and told her that someone was trying to kill him.

He said he had received a voodoo doll through the post and a cow's heart hammered through with nails. Three days later, Mr Gargani went for a walk along the cliffs that overlook Lewes and plunged 300 feet to his death.

When police visited his flat they found pages from the Bible plastered across the walls along with the scrawled cry for help. At an inquest into Mr Gargani's death, the coroner, Veronica Hamilton-Decley, recorded an open verdict.

She said: "I certainly can't ignore a cry for help and the evidence suggests that he got caught up in this stuff. I can't explain his death." Although police say there is no evidence to link the teenager directly to Mr Gargani's death, friends of the dead man say he had fallen under his influence. Johnny Dennis, who knew Mr Gargani well, said: "It sounds like Nick was sufficiently disturbed [to kill himself]. But only because of this very close contact with this

## Scots penguins bring love in from the cold

Kim Songupta

That hoary old myth that Scandinavians are red hot lovers has been firmly laid to rest. In fact, they now need help with their flagging libido from the allegedly dour Scots.

This, at least, is the case with penguins. Keepers from the Bergen Aquarium in Norway are visiting colleagues in Edinburgh to find out how they can re-awaken the romantic instincts of their birds, and reverse the serious lack of reproduction.

Edinburgh zoo will give their Norwegian guests a comprehensive assessment of what has gone wrong with the Gentoo penguins' hormones, examining in detail every aspect of their lives from diet to nesting materials.

The 100-or-so Gentus in the Scottish zoo have no such problems. Leading healthy, well-adjusted sex lives in outdoor families, and bringing up well behaved chicks.

David Field, a penguin keeper at Edinburgh zoo, explained that the birds are remarkably social and romantic creatures, with attitudes which would be considered ideal for the liberated 90s.

Pairs are loyal to each other, male penguins do not try to prove their machismo by playing around, and the "divorce" rate is extremely low. Partners tend to be changed only after one dies and then after a period of mourning.

Males, said Mr Field, are the epitome of the modern man. They play a full part in oest



Love interest: Penguins at Edinburgh zoo lead healthy sex lives, unlike those in Norway

Photograph: Colin McPherson

building, incubation and rearing the chicks. The pairs are also remarkably loyal to each other, and tend to stick to the same partner."

Nor are the pairings based purely on lust. The pairings start before the mating season begins and seem to grow stronger over time.

Just as in human relationships, presents mean a lot to a courting penguin. Mr Field explained: "As they prepare their nests, they start to form a very strong pair bond, through the presentation to each other of gifts. Like stones, very special stones, which are round and flat, and brightly coloured, as well as

small pieces of vegetation." And it is not just the male Gentus who come bearing gifts. The females are just as likely to present their own share of shiny stones and tasteful scrub. They do not seem to think they are being too forward, said Mr Field.

In Oslo, zoologist and author Olivia Sorensen said: "Obviously we are grateful for the help of the British experts. The Gentus are very nice creatures, and we want them to continue to reproduce in Bergen. As for the so-called sexual drive of Scandinavian humans, I always thought that was a strange Anglo-Saxon obsession."

## Poisoned apples add to Maff's troubles

Colin Brown  
Chief Political Correspondent

After BSE and *E.coli* in beef, now it is pesticides in good old British apples.

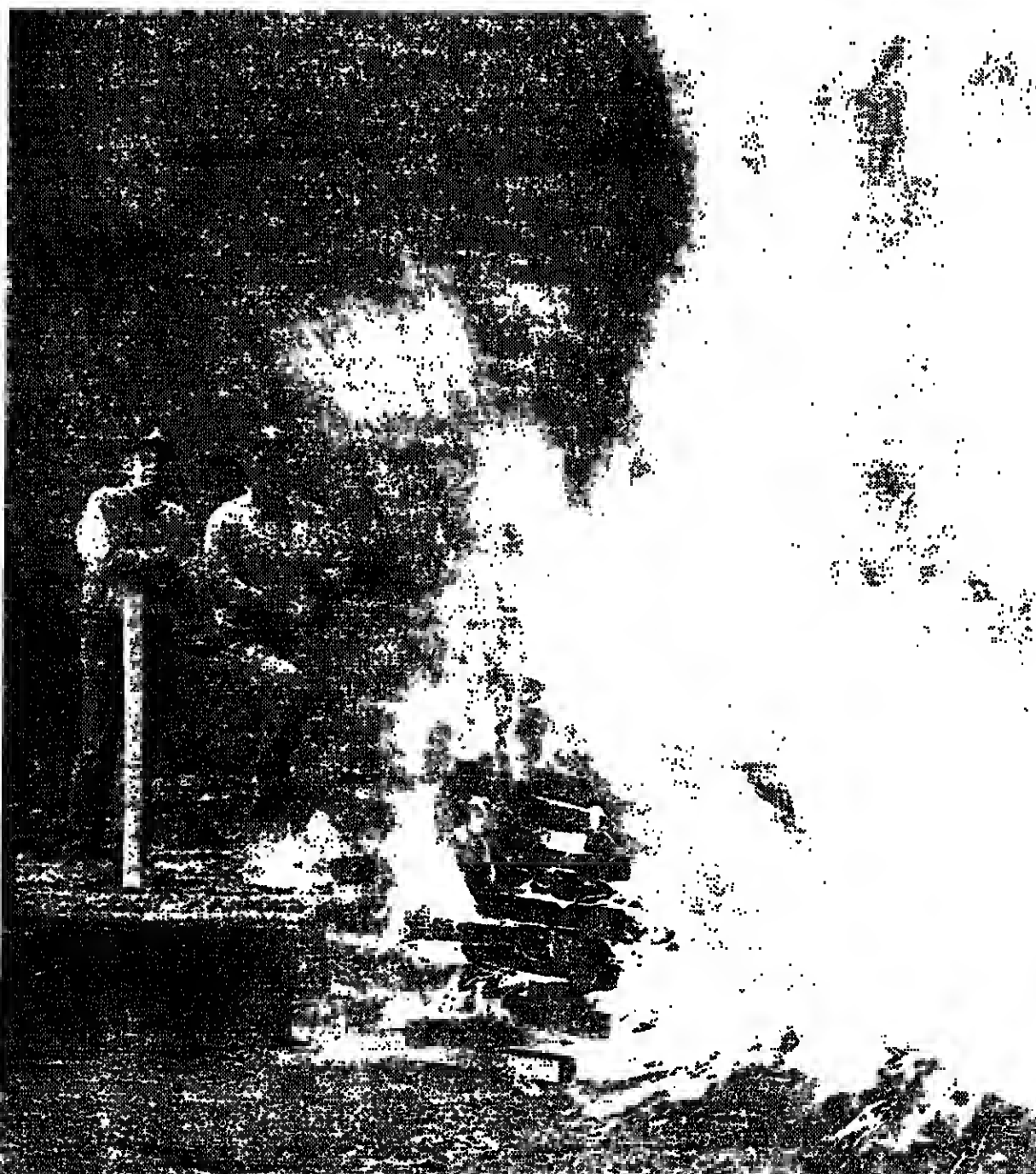
The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food announced the findings of a report showing that UK-produced apples have been found with high traces of pesticides.

Officials at Maff, dubbed the "Ministry of Incompetence", insisted that apples were safe to eat and the highest residues of pesticides found were still within internationally-accepted safety limits. One Maff source said: "It's not mad apple disease."

But the officials added the rider that it was wise to wash fruit before eating. Research showed that along with apples, the consumer's diet may include carbaryl, chlorpyrifos, paclobutrazol, triazophos, bananas may carry chlorpyrifos, and oranges may carry malathion, methidathion, and parathion methyl.

Professor Sir Colin Berry, chairman of the advisory committee on pesticides, said the chance of finding a high residue apple would be less than one in a thousand items of fruit.

The pesticides would have no effect on most people, said the officials. Toddlers and babies might get a reaction but only if they ate two of the "worst case" quarter-pound apples in one day, and they might suffer a bout of "gripping stomach". They would be more likely to be sick from apples than the pesticide.



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# Appeal on forced birth is refused

Kate Watson-Smyth

A pregnant woman who was detained under the Mental Health Act and forced to have a caesarean section was yesterday refused leave to seek a judicial review challenging the legality of the decision.

Mr Justice Popplewell said that Ms S, a 29-year-old veterinary nurse, had failed to launch the proceedings within the required three-month time limit and for that reason he was refusing her application.

Ms S, who cannot be named for legal reasons, wanted to bring the case in order to decide whether the 1983 Mental

a 10-month girl, said that she was disappointed but would appeal against the decision.

The court heard that Ms S had a long-standing aversion to medical intervention, including injections and anaesthesia.

She had planned to go to Wales, where she had close friends, in order to give birth there, but when she was diagnosed with pre-eclampsia she was advised to have bed rest, said Richard Gordon QC.

"She explained to the doctor that she was feeling fit and well and wanted a home delivery. She also said that as a veterinary nurse she was aware of the risk of pre-eclampsia."

But the doctors were fearful for the safety of Ms S and her baby and on 26 April, when she was 36 weeks pregnant, they obtained a court order for her to be detained and the caesarean section was carried out.

She said she was "angry and upset at being forced to undergo invasive surgery".

Mr Gordon told the court that after the operation Ms S found it difficult to bond with the baby and has suffered from flashbacks and post-traumatic stress disorder.

"The hospital applied for treatment without telling Ms S, or giving her the opportunity to go to court and put her side of the story. It cannot be right that a person should remain in ignorance of the application until it is too late to do anything about it," he said.

"This case enshrines a number of points involving fundamental human rights."

After the hearing, Barbara Hewson, representing Ms S, said: "This is a very important case for women generally and she has been turned away on a technicality."

She said that immediately after the birth, Ms S had rejected her baby and had considered having her fostered.

One of the reasons for the delay in bringing the application was the battle which she fought with the social services for custody of her daughter, after initially rejecting the baby.

Once she had made contact with a solicitor, there had been long delays in obtaining medical records and the application was not launched until 6 December, seven months after she had been released from hospital.

**6 The hospital applied for a detention order without giving her the chance to go to court 9**

Health Act can be used to detain a pregnant woman against her will and force her to undergo invasive surgery for physical, rather than mental, disorder.

An appeal is likely and the Court of Appeal will have to decide whether the issues raised by Ms S outweigh the fact that her application for a judicial review came too late.

She launched the challenge against Louise Collins, the London Borough of Merton's social worker who formally applied for her to be detained in hospital under the Act, and the NHS Trusts running the hospitals where she was held and treated - St George's, Tooting and Springfield Hospital.

The courts were also being asked to decide whether, once a person was detained, hospital managers acted lawfully in denying her access to a court, "or even informing her that it is intended to apply for a declaration in the Family Division that the treatment to which she does not consent may be forced upon her".

Speaking after the hearing Ms S, who is now the mother of



Showmanship: Dennis Neale demonstrating two of his puppets outside the building in Malvern he hopes to turn into the world's smallest theatre

Photograph: Peter Lea

## Loo becomes theatre of convenience

Richard Smith

The smallest theatre in the world is to open in an old Victorian lavatory. The former men's public convenience is just 16ft long and between 6 and 10ft wide.

The wedge-shaped building in Malvern, Hereford and Worcester, has a stone facade and many of the original white splashback tiles inside. But part-time social worker Dennis Neale, 49, believes it will be the perfect venue for one-man shows, poetry readings and puppet shows.

He plans to create a stage at one end measuring 6ft by 4ft, with seating on two levels for an audience of 15 people.

Mr Neale, an amateur puppeteer of Welland, near Malvern, has already christened the building the Theatre of Small Convenience. "Obviously the takings would be rather small so its not going to be a huge money-making venture," he said. "But it's a magical building and will provide a wonderfully intimate atmosphere."

"The seating has got to be very clever. I have this idea to do tiered seating in a honeycomb shape to maximise the number of people we can fit inside. The seats could be shaped like old-fashioned urinals which would be an unusual and eccentric touch."

"There will be no room for a bar and the ticket attendant will probably have to stand outside. Unfortunately there will be no changing rooms which might challenge some artists. They will probably have to change in the car or

at a nearby hotel - we could always provide them with an umbrella if it was raining."

"But I think it would be a challenge for actors to perform in such a small theatre. They certainly wouldn't need a microphone."

The new theatre in Edith Walk, Malvern, Worcester,

will be half the size of the building which currently lays claim to the title of the world's smallest theatre. The 1997 Guinness Book of Records gives that honour to the Piccolo theatre in Hamburg, Germany, which was founded in 1970 and boasts an audience capacity of 30.

Mr Neale is hoping to rent the council-owned building for around £35 a week. It will be a contrast to the Malvern Festival Theatre which is undergoing a £6.8m facelift.

The spa town stages its own festival every summer in honour of composer Sir Edward Elgar who lived nearby

in Lower Broadheath. But local wags are already suggesting the theatre should stage its own season of Shakespeare plays including *La's*, *Lahours Lost*, *King John*, *Toilet and Cressida* and *The Two Gents Of Verona*.

Mr Neale met Malvern town-centre manager Ms

Jane Allen yesterday to discuss the project and is hoping the new theatre could open within three months.

"I think it's an absolutely fantastic idea," Ms Allen said. "If theatre-goers want something more intimate than the West End then Malvern will be the place."

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# Industrial fishing draining the North Sea



**Nicholas Schoon**  
Environment Correspondent  
Bergen

North Sea nations cracked down on industrial suction fishing yesterday, and moved a step closer towards banning the dumping of huge quantities of freshly caught, dead fish back into the heavily over-fished sea.

At the two-day meeting in Norway's second city, the eight nations – seven from the European Union, plus Norway – called for fishing to be banned or restricted where it was doing local harm to the marine ecosystem.

Nations move to ban 'suction' catches and dumping of freshly caught, dead fish

The move is intended to restrict industrial fishing which sucks up small fish and beam trawlers which drag heavy chains along the sea bed.

Denmark's Environment minister, Svend Auken, said that his country, the EU's biggest industrial fisher, would respect such bans. Roughly half the tonnage of fish caught in the North Sea consists of these small fish near the base of food chains, used to make oil and livestock feed. These catches are not controlled

by quota but the North Sea states said they should be.

Fisheries and environment ministers countries also agreed on an urgent search for ways of minimising discards – the throwing back of netted but unwanted fish – "including the possibility of a ban".

Each year, hundreds of thousands of tonnes of fish are dumped overboard from trawlers, a wasteful side effect of the EU's fish quotas. Germany said that for each kilo-

gram of plaice brought to shore, 15kg of other fish and marine species were thrown back dead.

John Gummer, Britain's Secretary of State for the Environment, who has worked closely with environmental organisations, said that the declaration ministers had signed meant big changes in fishing.

"I want my children to be able to eat North Sea cod and I want there to be enough kept in the sea for fishermen's children to be able to make a living from

fishing too," he said. "The ecological health of our seas is now the fundamental driver."

But Greenpeace, the World Wide Fund for Nature and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds said: "The overfishing continues and the ministerial declaration remains fundamentally flawed."

Germany also said too little had been agreed.

Robert Allan, chief executive of the Scottish Fisherman's Federation, said the final declaration was a sensible, pragmatic solution. He was satisfied that it was a much weaker document than the first draft which opened the Bergen negotiations over a year ago.

But the EU's fisheries commissioner, Emma Bonino, warned: "There will be tough measures for the fishing communities and it will not be easy for their lives." The declaration said cuts in fishing fleets or other restraints on fishing beyond those agreed were necessary.

Implementing the ministerial declaration now depends entirely on the decisions of Norway and all 15 European Union member states which together rule North Sea fishing. There was much argument during the talks about how far the seven North Sea states could go in committing all 15 to action.

Mr Gummer promised that when Britain was president of the European Union in 1998 it would review how far the Bergen declaration was being implemented. And Germany said it would do the same when it held the presidency the year after.

## Smugglers roll out barrel against the excise men

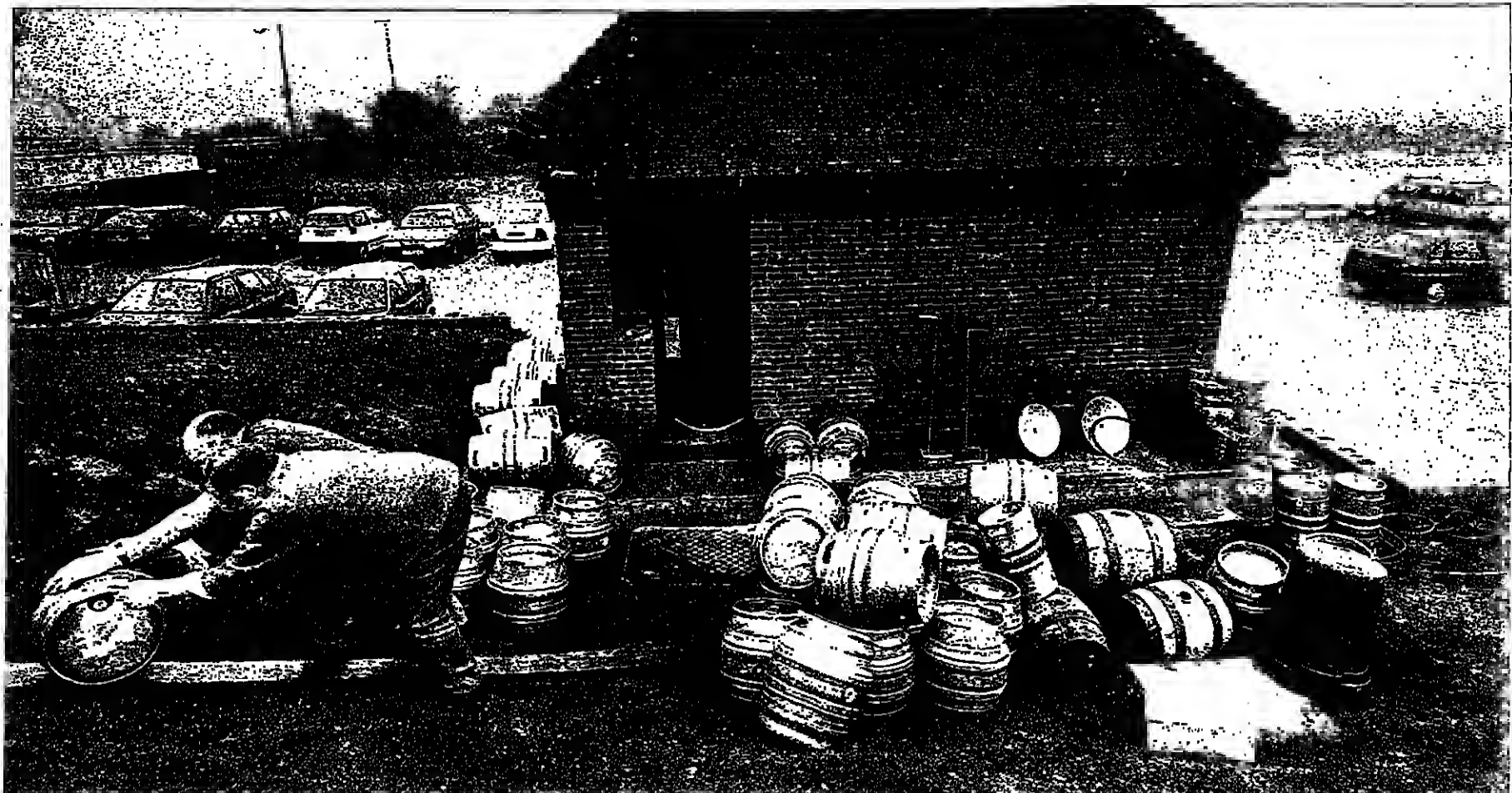
### A SMUGGLER'S SONG

Five and twenty ponies  
Trotting through the dark  
Brandy for the Parson,  
Baccy for the Clerk,  
Laces for a lady, letters for a spy,  
And watch the wall, my darling,  
While the Gentlemen go by!

Rudyard Kipling



**True Gents:** A regular at the Golden Galleon presents his membership card (left) as the latest batch of beer is carried from the brewery to be sold, duty-free, in the public bar. Photographs: David Rose



Kate Watson-Smyth

When the mist rolls in off the sea you can almost hear the thudding hooves of the smugglers' horses as they race up the valley carrying their precious hauls of contraband away from the prying eyes of the excise militia.

Often, the "Gentlemen" would take refuge in the old alehouse in this corner of East Sussex, known as Smugglers' Valley. Now, 200 years on,

the countryside has hardly changed around the tiny hamlet of Exceat near Newhaven. The alehouse is still there – and the fight against the militia men is still passionately fought.

A group of regulars at The Golden Galleon have formed a society with a common purpose. The beer is no longer smuggled on to the premises, merely carried up to the pub from the tiny brewery outside;

but it is dispensed from behind the bar – and what's more, it's duty free. The Gentlemen Entrepreneurs Nil Taxation Society (Gents) was formed in protest at what members see as the excessive duty levied on beer by Her Majesty's Government. In France, drinkers pay the equivalent of around 4p a pint, but in this corner of the European Union the taxman takes 25p.

The Gents are prepared to fight

to the bitter end. Well, almost – a building society account is holding the duty for which they might be liable, just in case. But Alan Edgar, secretary of the club, is confident it will not come to that.

"We buy the raw ingredients, not the alcohol, and then it is dispensed in the bar using a system of chits. So, as we're not selling beer, we don't have to pay duty."

As far as the letter of the law is

concerned he would appear to have a point, although Customs and Excise, who have been informed, are keeping a beady eye on the situation. It would seem that as the rules stand they can do nothing. But if too many people jump on the hand-wagon it could be in their interest to test the case in court.

And while Mr Edgar remains sanguine, all around him in the packed lunchtime bar, Gents (both

male and female) are waving their membership cards at the barman and drinking deep.

It costs £25 to join, and that entitles members to 25 pints. The money represents the cost of the raw ingredients, which they then own. This means they do not have to buy the beer for a second time once it has been brewed. Each time someone orders a pint, his card is clipped until he has finished his share. After a

corkage charge and "rent" to the brewery, beer works out at 62p a pint.

Reg Voudsen, whose family has lived in the Cuckmere Valley for generations and who is probably descended from the original "Gentlemen" who so inspired Kipling, said: "It's so stupid that the French pay so little duty and we pay so much. We were told when we went into Europe that things would be equalised – otherwise what is the point?"

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politics

# We've given up: Columnists articulate Tory despair



Colin Brown  
Chief Political Correspondent

Matthew Parris, the former Tory MP, yesterday became the third Conservative commentator in 48 hours to write-off the Tories chances of winning the general election.

The consensus among the scribbling Tory classes is that the Tories are heading for defeat.

‘Farewell you judicious conditionals. Ever since Wirral, the media have been talking in red-hot indicative mood’

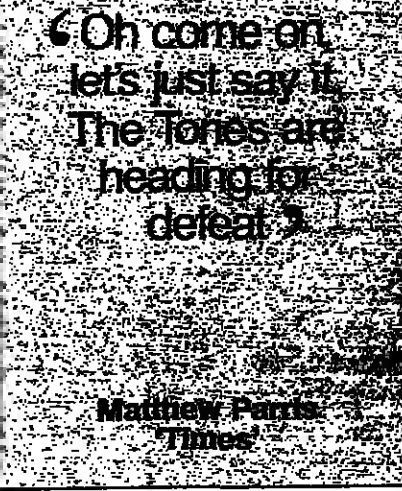
Boris Johnson  
‘Daily Telegraph’



But they are already writing about the succession for the Tory leadership. In a call for John Major after defeat to stay on as a caretaker leader for 12 months, Mr Parris said: ‘A presumption is growing that if the Tories lose then John Major goes – quickly. The presumption is unfounded, almost without precedent, and wrong. It should be rebutted now.’

Boris Johnson, who is standing for the Tories in Chwyd South, was the first to admit the writing was on the wall after the Wirral by-election.

Writing in the *Daily Telegraph* under the headline, Mr Johnson said: ‘It’s no longer if it’s when... It’s Labour will win, and Labour will win, and never mind the formality of the election.’



‘On come on, let’s just say it. The Tories are heading for defeat’

Matthew Parris  
‘Times’

‘Having decided that Peter Mandelson will get a cabinet job, the real cool cats of punditry are already discussing Mr Blair’s second reshuffle.’

‘What an extraordinary position, when spring is here, and the weather so fine... The Opposition appears predestined to win? And yet so they appear.’

He said it had been immoral for the government to put up taxes and for Mr Major to keep Britain in the European exchange rate mechanism before it was forced out on ‘Black Wednesday’.

‘It cost, while it was in operation, a million jobs, 100,000 homes repossessed and businesses failing, and no one took any responsibility for it. That was a great moral mistake in this Conservative Party’s history.’

Mr Parris, writing in the *Times*, said: ‘Granted miracles can happen. Tony Blair might be eaten by a shark. The Archangel Gabriel might appear in Trafalgar Square on the eve of poll and command Britain to vote Conservative. Jack Straw might read his paper the wrong way up and pledge himself to the slaughter of the first-born. Though any vacuum as perfect as new Labour remains capable at all times of imploding, the vacuum chamber has been engineered well and replicated in steel. The chances of accident diminish as the clock ticks.’

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# Top judge attacks Howard's jury plan

Jason Bennett  
Crime Correspondent

A new battlefront opened up yesterday in the war of words between the judiciary and the Home Secretary, as the country's most senior judge attacked proposals by Michael Howard to abolish the right to elect trial by jury.

Lord Bingham of Cornhill, the Lord Chief Justice, said the right was a ‘valuable principle’ and vital if the public was to believe in the fairness of the court system. He also warned that it could lead to injustice.

Mr Howard has clashed repeatedly with the judiciary during his controversial four-year tenure at the Home Office.

Lord Bingham's latest criticism follows proposals by Mr Howard to speed up the criminal justice system. Lord Bingham said that some of the changes ‘seem wrong in principle’ and that he feared the reforms ‘might lead to error’.

Among the most controversial suggestions is the removal of a defendant's automatic right to have a case dealt with by a jury for a series of offences that currently can be heard either by magistrates or in the Crown Court.

Among offences that can be heard by magistrates or at a Crown Court are theft, possession of an offensive weapon and gross indecency. An estimated 35,000 cases a year would be affected by the move, which is intended to result in more cases being dealt with by magistrates, to avoid delays and extra ex-

pense. The plan was condemned by the Law Society and the Bar Council, who believe it is a fundamental right.

Lord Bingham, speaking to magistrates in Gloucester last night, said: ‘I... consider that it is an important guarantee of public acceptance of that unique role and function that a defendant, accused of other

than minor crime, is not obliged against his will to be tried by justices [magistrates].

‘It is not a question of crown court trial being fairer than trials in magistrates' court, or jurors being more open-minded than justices. It is a question of public perception.’

# Labour to axe rights quangos

Barrie Clement  
Labour Editor

Labour is planning to abolish the quangos on race and sex discrimination and create a powerful human rights commission to police civil liberties.

A Blair administration would incorporate the European Convention on Human Rights into law and senior Labour figures believe there should be one body to enforce its provisions.

Supporters of the plan point out that a single organisation would enjoy a higher profile and save expenditure. It is envisaged that the new ‘super quango’ could incorporate the functions of the Data Protection Registrar and the Fair Employment Commission in Northern Ireland, which combats discrimination on grounds of religion. The new body would also champion the rights of the disabled and victims of ‘ageism’.

Senior figures at the two biggest commissions are aware of the plans, and there private misgivings that a ‘single rights commission’ would not promote the aspirations of women and ethnic minorities as strongly as the existing system. There

are also fears about job losses. Herman Ouseley, chair of the CRE, is to express caution about the idea in the next edition of his organisation's *Concurrence* magazine. In the article he contends that while there is a strong argument for a single body, it would only enjoy the support if it could be proved that a single body enhanced the opportunities of the most disadvantaged sections of society.

Elizabeth Hodder, deputy chairwoman of the EOC, said there would have to be a ‘comprehensive and objective’ debate about a human rights commission: ‘It should not be at the expense of the dilution of existing rights under sex discrimination legislation.’

Despite the EOC's caution, Kamlesh Bahl, its chairwoman, would be uniquely placed to take over as head of the new commission because of her gender and Asian ethnic origin.

Her past association with the Conservative Party is unlikely to be a disadvantage. A Blair administration might be well disposed towards someone who does not necessarily see increased public expenditure as the solution to problems.

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# Election defeat not an option for faithful

Anthony Bevis  
Political Editor

The closest Tory loyalists could come to defeatism yesterday was to talk in hushed tones about the possibility of a hung result in the May election, with no overall majority in the Commons for John Major.

While former ministers were broadcasting their fears of a hung result to the nation, the Conservative Central Council was assembling in Bath to be rallied to the flag by Brian Mawhinney, the Party Chairman.

But the council representatives - largely elderly officers of the country's constituency associations - needed little encouragement.

While MPs at Westminster were this week talking of the possibility, if not likelihood, of losing as many as 100 seats in the election, the party activists were talking of getting back into power with the same kind of 20-seat majority Mr Major won in 1992.

One woman from South Thanet said that while some people talked of a 60-seat Tory majority, she thought 20 was about right. "We'll get a majority, but it could be about the same as last time," she said. "It'll be a tight squeeze," she added.

A man from Hemel Hempstead echoed that view, saying: "I imagine it'll be more tight this time. A majority of 100 would be nice but it's more likely to be 10 or 20." A similar view came from a man from Chelmsford,

who said: "It'll be small but not much different from last time."

But there was also talk of an even tighter result - though not defeat. "It wouldn't surprise me if it was a hung parliament," a man from Bath said. "It's not looking brilliant at the moment."

But the Conservative grass roots activists refused even to consider the possibility that Mr Major might have to stand down, as leader, following election defeat.

While John Biffen and Edwina Currie, two former ministers, were painting that scenario in radio broadcasts yesterday, the party faithful were busily imitating Mr Major, defying the faint hearted and deploring defeatist talk.

"He's a fine chap," said a man from Milton Keynes, when asked about Mr Major. "And I've not ever thought about the succession, because it is not happening."

One man from Charnwood, Stephen Dorrell's new constituency, said Mr Major would be the next leader, though he fancied his own MP, Mr Dorrell, for some time in the future. "I think he would make a good leader," he said. But the man from West Chelmsford was more representative of the general mood. "Older Cabinet ministers would go and new people would come into the Cabinet, and new runners would enter the race. There's plenty of time yet. Let's see, shall we?" he said.



No laughing matter: Comic relief and red noses gave little mood for optimism among the Tory faithful at Bath yesterday

Photograph: David Rose

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## Watts cranks up the party gaffe machine

Colin Brown  
Chief Political Commentator

The culture of bar-room bores which has infected dinner parties in East Anglia appeared to be spreading to the Tory Party yesterday after a second minister caused outrage with off-the-cuff remarks.

John Watts, the Transport minister, appalled environmental activists by saying he would be happy to see the roads protester nicknamed Swampy "buried in concrete".

It came as the Prime Minister and Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, jumped to the defence of Home Office minister David Maclean who outraged liberal opinion by appearing to bracket "Roisin McAisley, held in custody for extradition to Germany on alleged IRA charges, with the convicted murderer Myra Hindley."

A tape recording was made of Mr Watts by Hull University students as he chatted after a meeting at the Tory head-

quarters. Mr Watts said: "I couldn't care less what Swampy says. I would happily bury him in concrete."

Mr Maclean, wrote to a 79-year-old constituent, Judith Naylor of Appleby, Cumbria, who had asked for compassion for Ms McAisley, while she was pregnant and in prison without trial. He replied: "When the day comes that the evil scum of the IRA are no longer murdering the innocent, and our children are no longer tortured by the Hindleys of this world, then I am certain that when I no longer need all my compassion for the innocent, I shall be able to spare some for the perpetrators."

Mr Howard said: "The BBC's treatment of this story has been a disgrace. Their news bulletins this morning suggested David Maclean had equated Roisin McAisley with Myra Hindley. That is completely untrue."

Mr Major said the reports of Mr Maclean's comments had been "grotesque".

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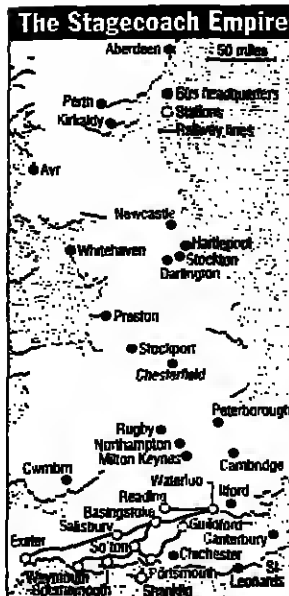
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## news

Train of misfortune: Tough ultimatum from watchdog leaves South West Trains facing ultimate loss of its £270m business

## Rail company faces £1m fine over cancelled service



Randeep Ramesh  
Transport Correspondent

Stagecoach, the company that runs the troubled train line, South West Trains, faces a £1m fine from the rail watchdog and ultimately the loss of the £270m business unless it improves its cancellation-hit service.

The company, which runs commuter trains from London to Hampshire and Surrey, was also fined £750,000 last month for wiping 39 trains from its schedule. John O'Brien, the franchising director, took the decision after "passengers suffered an unacceptable level of cancellations".

SWT has had a run of bad fortune. First, work on a stretch of track took nine days to complete instead of a weekend. Secondly, the company shed 70 of its older, more experienced

train drivers - forcing its to cut daily schedules. Managers also suggest that a small minority of drivers are unhappy with the new pay deal - accepted by the unions - and are wrecking timetables with a campaign of "non co-operation".

This will cut little ice with passengers. More than 100,000 rail commuters faced nightmare journeys home yesterday after trains were reduced in length and then slowed to a crawl because of a track fire. "I've been delayed for three hours," said Louise Cronk, a 26-year-old planning consultant. "This has become a part of everyday life. I'm just fed up."

Mr O'Brien has a string of financial penalties he can impose under the contract with Stagecoach. In the case of SWT, Stagecoach would face substantial fines if it ran less than

98.5 per cent of its daily scheduled service.

The train firm has been called in to explain poor service levels twice in the first 12 months under private ownership. The government rules mean if any operator breaches the agreed service levels three times in three years, substantial fines will be imposed.

Managers first met civil servants last summer when worn hearings on some older carriages forced SWT to cut back on the length of trains. They were called in again to explain why service levels dipped below the 98.5 per cent limit in February after SWT cut driver numbers by 10 per cent.

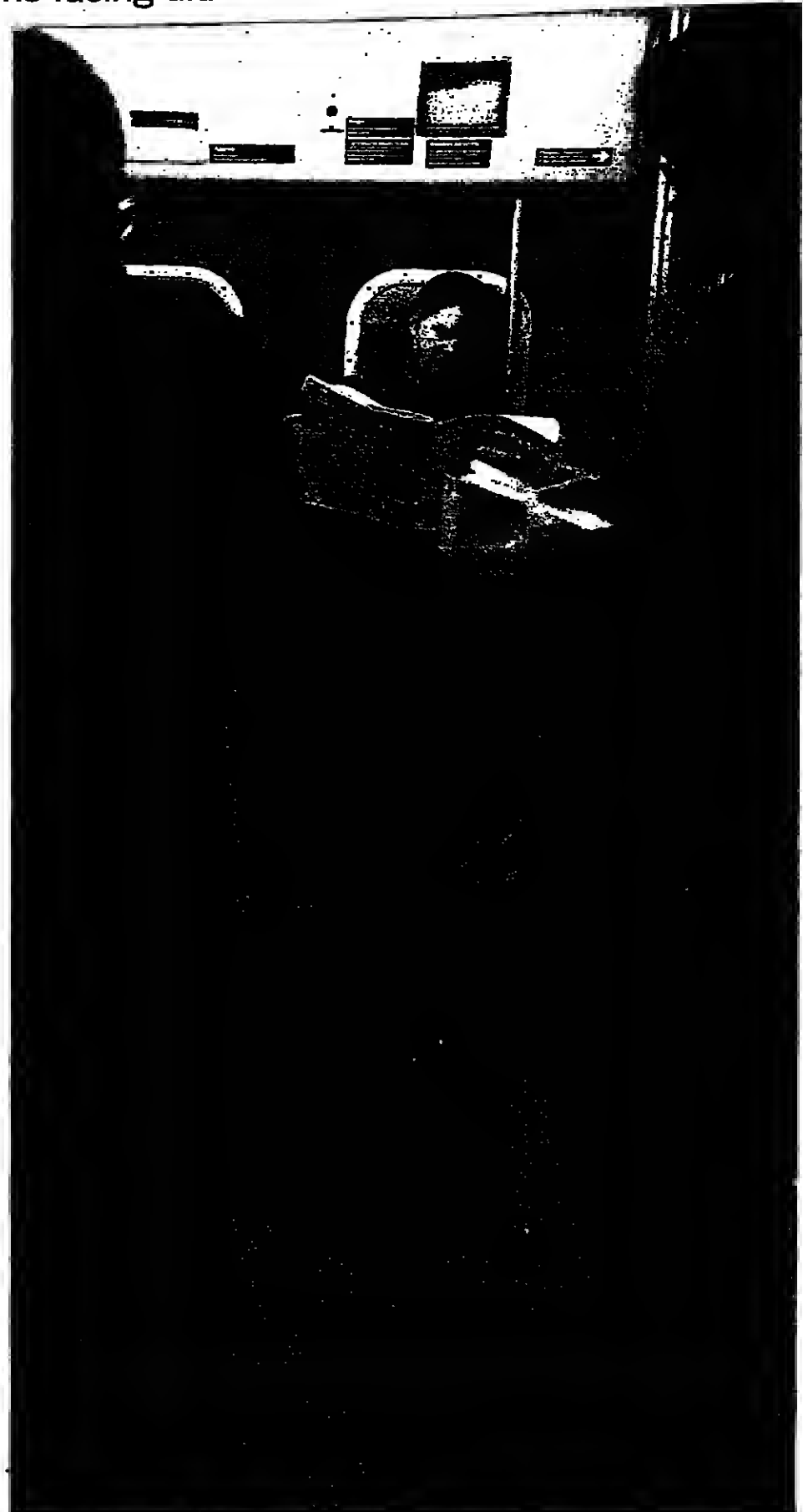
Opraf, the office of passenger franchising, will levy the £1m fine if SWT breaches the limit again in April. Stagecoach could lose the franchise - which would cost

the company its performance bond worth £20m - if service levels dip below 97.5 per cent.

Brian Cox, the managing director of SWT, said the company was confident of "meeting the Opraf targets". "I think Opraf has made this announcement... to show MPs it has teeth and knows what it is doing. We plan to have a full service running again by April 1," he said.

Save Our Railways, the rail pressure group, called for the service to be nationalised. "It was the first to fall into public hands, the first to go wrong and should be the first back into the private sector," said national secretary Keith Bill.

He added: "The public should be aware that a £1m fine for Stagecoach, who get £60m a year to run it, will have as little effect as using a peashooter against an elephant."



Railroaded: Commuters and long-distance passengers to the south-west are frustrated over trains that are cancelled or fail to finish their journey

### Bus firm that took the fast route into trouble

Michael Harrison  
and Randeep Ramesh

When the bus company Stagecoach won the franchise to run South West Trains just over a year ago, its chairman, Brian Souter, paid a visit to his new business. He was amazed to discover that SWT received 40,000 letters of complaint a year from passengers. The Stagecoach chairman said his bus companies received virtually no such letters, adding: "We judge customer satisfaction by the number of bricks we get through the window."

The glass is still intact at SWT's offices in Blackfriars Road, a stone's throw from Waterloo station, but the brickbats are flying thick and fast.

How different it all seems to February last year, when Stagecoach became the first private company to take over one of the country's 25 rail franchises. John Watts, Minister for Railways and Roads, greeted "this historic announcement as excellent news for passengers".

Stagecoach trumpeted plans to introduce more services: "We firmly believe the route to success lies in attracting more people to our services and this means more, not less trains."

Thirteen months on, the crisis SWT has run into is all too predictable, according to railway managers. Although Stagecoach was granted a generous subsidy deal - it will receive £368m over the life of the franchise - it had its work cut out to make a profit while surviving on a declining level of taxpayers' support. By 2003, the Government says it will have saved £243m by privatising SWT.

"With a service like SWT, there are limits to how much you can push revenues," says one railway executive. "It is difficult to grab a bigger share [of the market], so you have to rely

on the overall market growing, and that is not happening."

SWT decided to do the obvious thing - maximise fare income from its existing passengers, while cutting costs. Critics now say SWT is under-managed. "The general problem is the lack of managers," says one observer. "The system is left to run itself."

An example of SWT's management style was an attempt to appease irate customers by offering free travel for a day to compensate for the recent spate of cancellations. The offer was only intended to apply to SWT's lines but ticket offices began handing out free travel everywhere, including Eurostar services to Paris, until a frantic message was sent out from SWT headquarters instructing staff to limit availability.

But the biggest cost-saving measure so far, and the cause of SWT's current predicament, is the axing of 70 drivers, a tenth of the total, through a voluntary redundancy programme.

At the same time, it decided to begin shifting trains between depots. For instance, those operating on the Reading-to-Brighton route were moved to the Basingstoke depot. As the drivers there were unfamiliar with the route, SWT had to hire in "pilot drivers" from another private train operator.

It would not have mattered had Stagecoach been able to treat SWT like one of its bus companies. Outside London, the bus industry is not only privatised but deregulated. Operators can axe services and even run buses for free to drive out the opposition. In 1993, a

Monopolies and Mergers Commission report found the company's Southdown subsidiary charged uneconomic fares in Bognor Regis. In 1994, Mr Souter gave undertaking of "good behaviour" to the Director General of Fair Trading for two of Stagecoach's bus companies. Last year, after the MMC investigated Stagecoach's activities in Dartington, it concluded the company had acted in a manner which was "predatory, deplorable and against the public interest".

The City has bought the Stagecoach success story, so far. Mr Souter started the company with his sister, Ann Gloag, 26 years ago, with £25,000 and two coaches. When the business was floated on the stock market in 1993 it was worth £100m. It is now valued at £1.3bn.

But the acquisition of SWT and the equally controversial £825m takeover of the train leasing company Porterbrook last summer, have come at a hefty price. As of last October, it had borrowings of £750m against shareholders' funds of £143m.

And there are signs of nervousness on the stock market. Shares are down from their year-high of 799p and yesterday lost another 23p, to 733.5p.

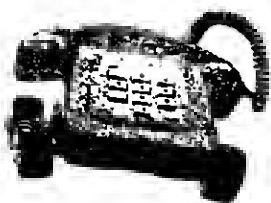
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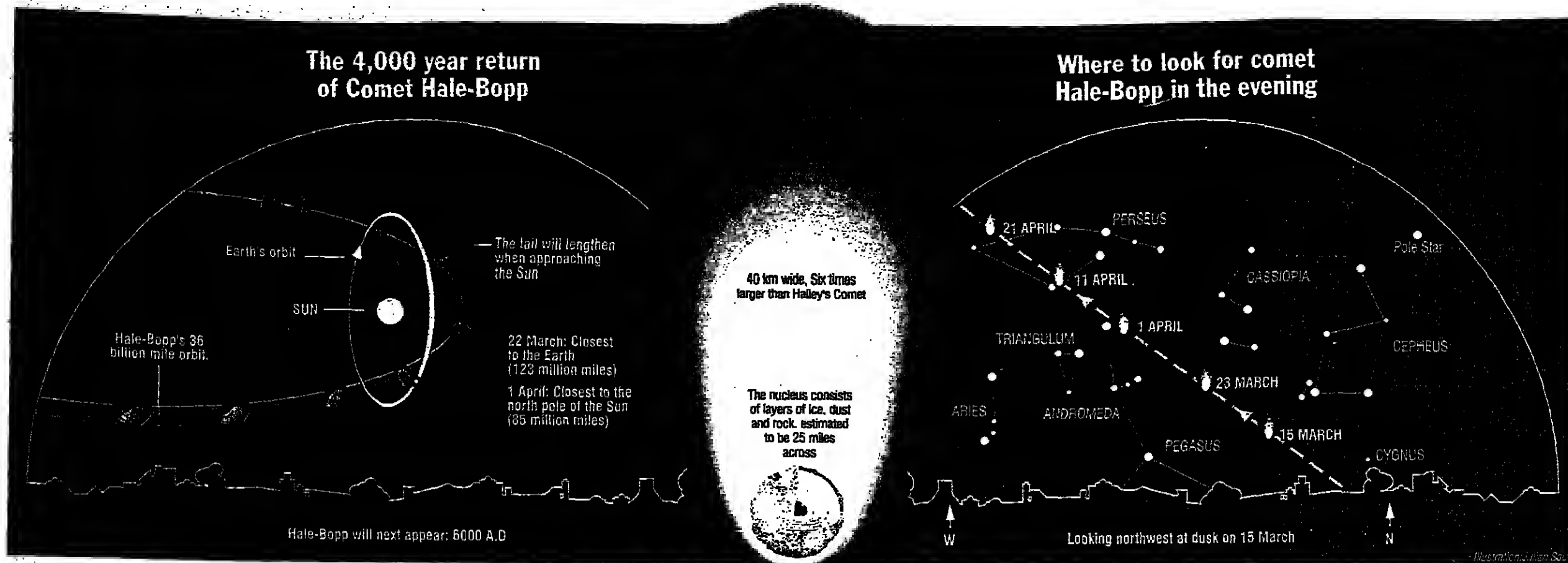


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# Brightest way to chase the tail of the comet



Charles Arthur  
Science Editor

Astronomers say it is the brightest comet we will see for the rest of this century – and from this evening it should be visible to anyone with a pair of binoculars.

Comet Hale-Bopp, a 40km-wide "dirty snowball" of mud and ice has already delighted astronomers by producing a bright show that has far outdone two predecessors in the past 10 years. Halley's Comet in 1986 and Comet Hyakutake last year.

"It's like London buses," said Duncan Copp, of Mill Hill Observatory near London yesterday. "You wait for years and then they all turn up at once."

Unlike its predecessors, which were hard to see without telescopes, Hale-Bopp should be easily visible after dark and before dawn with the naked eye, though Dr Copp suggests that those wanting a really good view should take a pair of binoculars, as they offer a wider field of view than a telescope.

"To view it in the evening, you want an unobstructed

view of the north-west horizon," he said. "You can see it at any time after twilight. It is an impressive sight, though people could be disappointed if they don't get away from lights." Just before sunrise it should be visible on the north-east horizon.

Those who do take the trouble will see the bright nucleus, made of a frozen conglomerate of ice and interstellar dust, and the tail, consisting of gases boiling off from the nucleus as it nears the sun on its 8,000-year round trip. For that reason, the tail points away from the sun, rather than in the direction of the comet's travel.

Its closest approach to the Earth will be on 22 March, when it will be 123 million miles away from us, further than we are from the sun, and its closest approach to the sun occurs on 1 April, when it will be 85 million miles away. (The Earth is 93 million miles from the sun.)

Those keen to photograph the comet need a camera whose lens can be set to an exposure of minutes, and should use fast film – at least 400 ASA – and a tripod.

## Flying heaps of ice which are key to the origins of life

To say that Comet Hale-Bopp is a "40km-long flying mountain of ice" would be to ignore the far wider importance of comets in the scheme of things. Recent studies suggest that comets similar to Hale-Bopp were responsible for giving the Earth its oceans, its atmosphere and perhaps even life.

The most detailed information concerning comets has come from spaceprobe studies of Comet Halley in 1986. These show that nearly half their mass consists of highly complex organic molecules, similar in spectral properties to bacterial cells. The assortment of smaller organic molecules found in comets' gaseous envelopes results from the breakup of more complex organic structures.

It has recently become clear that the Earth's atmosphere could not have produced the organic building blocks needed to start life. These are now thought by a majority of planetary scientists and geochemists to have come from comets.

Between 4,500 million years ago when the Earth was formed and 3,800 million years ago, our planet was pummeled by comets and meteorites, giving rise to the Hadean (hellish) epoch. Towards the end of this epoch, the oceans, the atmosphere and primitive life came into being, at almost exactly the same time. Moreover, there is evidence that the carbonaceous deposits associated with the Earth's oldest rocks – laid down during this period – may have had a biological origin.

Because the conditions prevailing on the Earth at this time were far too inhospitable for life to originate, it seems reasonable to think that fully fledged microbial life may have been arriving along with the comets. Cometary life then took root on Earth at the first moment that favourable conditions evolved.

The spectacular tail of a comet, such as is now seen in

Hale-Bopp is more than a pretty light, writes Professor Chandra Wickramasinghe

Comet Hale-Bopp, is caused by the release of dust particles embedded in the frozen crust which evaporates as it approaches the Sun. However, when dust production is seen at great distances from the Sun, a different explanation is required. Comet Halley was still throwing out dust when it had receded beyond the orbit of Jupiter, and a similar release was seen in Comet Hale-Bopp in August 1995.

A few months ago I, together with Professor Sir Fred Hoyle and microbiologist Professor David Lloyd of Cardiff University, argued that this remarkable behaviour could reasonably be explained if microbiology was at work in liquid domains beneath a hard-frozen crust. Bacterial activity can release large amounts of gases, creating high-pressure pockets and causing sporadic explosions of the overlying crust – rather like the fermentation of liquor in sealed jars.

On the comet, the crust could shatter and then refreeze, leading to sporadic outbursts. When you watch the spectacular outbursts of Comet Hale-Bopp in the coming days, consider for a moment that you might be witnessing the process by which the fabric of life is transferred throughout the Universe.

Chandra Wickramasinghe is Professor of Applied Mathematics and Astronomy at the University of Wales in Cardiff. With Sir Fred Hoyle, he has written numerous books and papers dealing with the cosmic origins of life. Their latest book, *Life on Mars? - the case for a cosmic heritage*, is published next month by CUP, Bristol.

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## news

# Leaked letter widens schism in Jewry

Reformists  
accuse Chief  
Rabbi of no  
longer speaking  
for all Jews

Ian Burrell

The rift between the Orthodox and Reform Jewish communities in Britain dramatically deepened yesterday after it was disclosed that the Chief Rabbi, Dr Jonathan Sacks, had accused Rabbi Hugo Gryn, a Holocaust survivor who died last August, of being a destroyer of Judaism.

The attack, in a leaked letter to a right-wing Orthodox Jewish leader, intensifies the row between the Orthodox tradition and the Reformists over Dr Sacks and his attitude to Rabbi Gryn, a Reformist.

Last night, Rabbi Dr Jonathan Romain, spokesman for the Reform Synagogues of Great Britain, called on Dr Sacks to renounce his title. "Clearly, the Chief Rabbi no longer represents all Jews and speaks only for the Orthodox sector," he said.

"He no more represents Reform and liberal Jews than does the Archbishop of Canterbury represent Catholics and Methodists."

The acrimonious dispute followed Dr Sacks' non-attendance at the funeral of Rabbi



Battle of orthodox: The Chief Rabbi, Dr Jonathan Sacks (left) and Rabbi Hugo Gryn, who died last year

Gryn, which angered the Reform movement, and his presence at a later memorial ceremony, which in turn caused outcry among some Orthodox Jews.

In his letter, leaked to the *Jewish Chronicle*, Dr Sacks said that his only reason for attending the memorial was to avoid giving the Reform movement a reason for appointing its own chief rabbi. He said Rabbi Gryn was one of "those who destroy the faith" as part of a "false grouping".

He assured Dayan Chanoch

Padwa, the 90-year-old head of the Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations, that he was paying recognition to Rabbi Gryn, "not as a Reform rabbi but as a survivor of the Holocaust".

Supporters of Rabbi Gryn, who was known to millions through his appearances on BBC Radio 4's *Moral Maze* and *Thought for the Day* programme, said the letter could lead to large numbers of British Jews dissociating themselves from the Chief Rabbi.

Although Dr Sacks is technically the Chief Rabbi only of the



Jew praying in the synagogue on Yom Kippur by Maurice Gottlieb, from Jewish Art, to be published in May by Harry N. Abrams, price £120

United Synagogues, the main Orthodox group, he is seen by many Jews and non-Jews as the leader of British Jewry.

Dr Sacks described the leaking of his "Not for Publication" letter, which was written in Hebrew, as a "scandalous betrayal" and attempted a damage limitation exercise by writing an explanation of the context of the letter in the *Jewish Chronicle*. He praised Rabbi Gryn as "a man of courage and deep humanity", but stopped short of retracting his attacks on his religious work.

Dr Sacks called on all Anglo-Jewish leaders to join in a Coalition for Peace in the Community to prevent disunity. "We must now call a halt to the debate over Hugo Gryn. May he be allowed to rest in peace, and may we, at last, learn to live in peace," he said.

He issued a seven-point list of principles for mutual respect between Jews, calling on them to work together on matters affecting them all — such as fighting anti-Semitism, remembering the Holocaust and improving relations with other

faiths such as Christianity and Islam.

Last night there was much speculation last night on the hidden agenda of the person responsible for the leaking.

Dr Sacks would only say: "The leak was a breach of confidence. It flouted the Jewish laws of privacy. It was intended to destroy the relationships of trust essential to communal harmony."

But Matthew Calman, the editor of *London Jewish News*, suggested the leak was a deliberate "trap" laid for reformists, in or-

der to re-open the divide in the Jewish community.

He said: "We have to ask who leaked this letter and why? The answer to that question is that Jonathan Sacks has made enormous strides towards reconciliation among the different movements in Anglo-Jewry over the last five years."

"The people who leaked this letter are his right-wing critics who despise Rabbi Romain and Reform. It is an attempt to destroy the kind of reconciliation which I know Rabbi Romain and his colleagues are working for."

Yesterday, the "trap" appeared to have worked. In a joint statement the British leaders of Reform Judaism called for a rethink of the post of Chief Rabbi. The statement said: "It seems that, constantly, the Chief Rabbi is forced into two conversations, embodying two sets of language and two messages tailored to the respective recipients. This is simply not consonant with a community of trust and integrity."

"He says that his whole purpose is to 'gain a victory' over us and then calls for peace."

## Rapists lose right to quiz victims

Ian Burrell

Alleged rapists who defend themselves will lose the automatic right to cross-examine their victims under plans announced yesterday by Michael Howard, the Home Secretary.

The move is aimed at ending the "double rape" of a victim, who is forced to relive her experience in minute detail by answering questions posed by the attacker in open court.

It follows the Old Bailey case last summer of Julia Mason, who suffered six traumatic days of court-room interrogation by the man who raped her twice. The case caused a public outcry.

Mr Howard said: "I think it is right that the courts should have the discretion, where necessary, to protect such vulnerable victims."

It is proposed that judges would be given discretion to stop defendants who are representing themselves in court from personally cross-examining victims of rape and other offences. Instead, cross-examination could only be conducted

by a representative of the defendant.

The move follows outrage that Mrs Mason, 34, had to face prolonged interrogation by her attacker, Ralston Edwards, who turned up in court in the same clothes he wore on the night of the rape. Edwards, who had raped before, was given two life sentences for the attack.

"He was reliving the rape," said Mrs Mason after the trial. "No other woman should go through this again."

She waived her right to anonymity to press for the law to be changed and complained to the European Commission of Human Rights about her treatment. "He was taunting me with questions about whether I wore any underwear, and implying he knew where my family lived," she said. "It was as if I had been raped once by Edwards, and again by the British judicial system."

Victim Support yesterday welcomed the plans. "Too many women don't report sex crimes because they fear the ordeal that faces them if they do," Paul Collins, its spokesman, said.

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# West faces military dilemma as Albania fragments

Emma Daly  
Tirana  
Andrew Gumbel

Western powers found themselves increasingly embroiled in Albania's anarchy yesterday as gunmen fired on US, German and Italian military forces trying to rescue Western residents. The United States was forced to suspend its evacuation efforts after two US Marine helicopters were fired on from the ground while attempting to take American nationals to safety.

Gunmen also fired shots from a police van at German troops arriving at a military airport by helicopter to bring out stranded Western citizens. The Germans shot back in what was believed to be the first time German soldiers have used weapons in anger abroad since 1945.

Amid the spreading chaos, and with almost nobody noticing, Sali Berisha effectively ceased to be president of Albania yesterday. With the whole country seemingly clamouring for his departure and all state authority supplanted by gangs of armed men, the international community chose to leave him languishing alone in his palace and tried instead to broker a solution to the crisis with Bashkim Fino, his newly appointed prime minister.

Mr Fino and ministers spent the day in talks on board an Italian warship with Franz Vranitzky, the former Austrian chancellor and special envoy for the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and begged the international community to intervene.

Mr Vranitzky and other Western officials said they might consider some kind of police operation to round up the rebels' weapons, but only under strict conditions. Mr Vranitzky said he saw no alternative to

outside military intervention. "I will report that there is no alternative as far as I can see. The decision has to be taken very quickly."

An immediate military operation has been excluded by Nato, the US and the Western European Union, and any subsequent action is likely to be promoted by individual countries, not international institutions. "First we must have a government that exercises real authority."

"And secondly, any intervention must have the agreement of all parties in Albania, including the rebel commanders in Vlorë and elsewhere. But we're a long way from fulfilling either condition," Italy's deputy foreign minister, Piero Fassino, said.

Diplomats said they saw Mr Fino, a member of the Socialist Party, which is bitterly opposed to Mr Berisha, as Albania's last hope.

The purpose of Mr Vranitzky's mission, they said, was to give him every possible political support and then sponsor negotiations with the rebel commanders who have ousted the state in cities across the country.

"If Fino doesn't work out, it is not clear if there will be any political authority left at all and then we will have to rethink our strategy from scratch," one European diplomatic source said.

One European diplomatic source said: "Berisha has been completely sidelined."

"As far as we are concerned, Fino is the last resort and if he doesn't work out it is not clear there will be any political authority left at all."

As for Mr Berisha, he told a French reporter yesterday that he had no intention of resigning. But the pressure on him to leave the country, or face a possible public lynching, was grow-



Reservations only: French paratroops push away Albanians trying to board a helicopter at Dures that had been sent to evacuate French nationals

Photograph: AFP

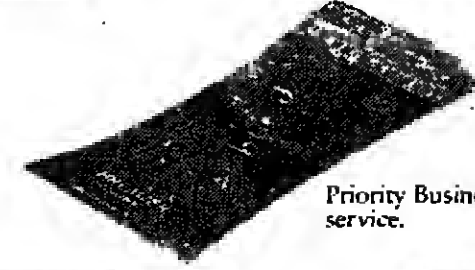
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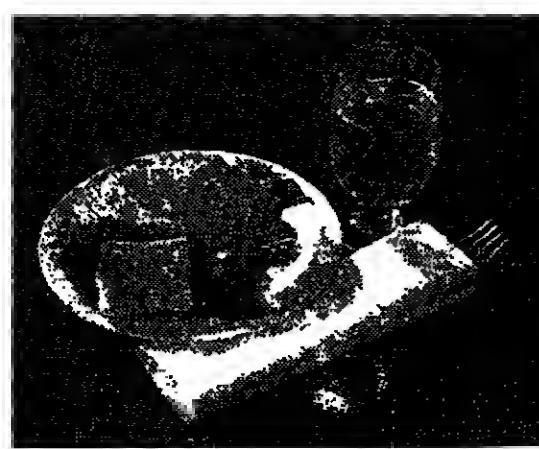
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## 'Now all the people have guns, they will never give them up'

Emma Daly  
Tirana

A curiously muted chaos has consumed the streets of Tirana. Nobody is in charge of the Albanian capital, and random gunmen are driving up and down the city's streets, firing into the air. And yet, there seems to be no air of panic. There is no civil war here, nor is there likely to be: it is more like a popular revolt against a corrupt leadership, fuelled both by fear and by a plentiful supply of weapons.

Residents of Tirana were out early yesterday morning, stockpiling whatever food was available, mostly apples and oranges on sale at a few stalls in the market. There were long queues at the few bakeries which opened yesterday; many were closed owing to a shortage of flour, following the sacking of Tirana's main flour depot on Thursday, when some food stores were looted.

Riza Lahi, a retired military pilot, was loaded down with plastic bags containing huge hunks of feta and yellow cheese, olives, frozen hamburgers.

"I didn't even ask the prices. I just spent all the money I had in my pocket," he said. "I love my motherland, and I don't want to leave, but I'm waiting to see what happens to the political situation."

Dozens of his compatriots, however, were lining up outside the manicured lawns of the US diplomatic compound, where US Marines organised the evacuation by helicopter of about 300 foreigners, mostly Americans, often to the sound of gun-fire. The airlift was suspended in the afternoon after a helicopter was hit by an anti-aircraft missile. Westerners lined up in life-jackets and helmets to board the helicopters sent down from the Nato force in Bosnia.

Bob Durham and his Albanian wife Eva stood with their

19-month-old son Jimmy. Why were they leaving? "Because her mother was hit in the head by a bullet yesterday and my brother-in-law was hit in the face by a bullet today," Mr Durham said succinctly.

Neither was badly wounded, but it was enough to persuade the Durhams to accept the help of the cavalry.

By 9am, Tirana's two hospitals had received nine dead and 159 wounded by gunfire. By 11am, the death toll had risen by two, and during a 15-minute visit to one emergency ward, two men were rushed in with bullet wounds.

Tonin Pellumbi was at home in Lapraske, a Tirana suburb, when a bullet struck just above his hip. "He was hit inside the

house," said Vladimir Goga, the neighbour who drove Mr Pellumbi to hospital. "It's terrible, too many people are shooting, especially in this area. Nobody can leave their house. Everyone is afraid, and there is so much noise."

Mr Pellumbi moaned in pain as doctors extracted the bullet. He was sent home soon after with no real damage done. Another young man had meanwhile been admitted, hit in the thigh as he sat at home chatting to a neighbour.

In the grounds of the hospital, spent cartridges marked the path of one of the many gunman firing at will in the city.

**There is no civil war here, more a revolt fuelled by a huge supply of weaponry**

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international

# With Sten guns and sovereigns Britain and US saved Iran's throne for the Shah

Monty Woodhouse personally flew the guns into Iran from Baghdad aboard an RAF aircraft to prepare for war with the Soviet Union. He bought Iranian "royals" for sovereigns and - at a secret rendezvous in the Tehran suburbs - handed the cash to one of two mysterious Iranian brothers to help finance plans for the overthrow of Mohamed Mossadeq.

To this day, Operation Boot - the original British intelligence ploy to get rid of the democratically elected Mossadeq and restore the Shah of Iran to his throne in 1953 - fascinates Colonel Monty Woodhouse, now 79 but with a mind as alert as that of a man half his age. "I've sometimes been told that I was responsible for opening the door to the ayatollahs," he says. "But we delayed Khomeini's return to Tehran by a quarter of a century."

The Iran of the early Fifties had some remarkable parallels with the revolution of 1979. The young Shah - "a nice, rather weak man ... always waiting to be advised", in Col Woodhouse's words - was dominated

**“We delayed Khomeini's return to Tehran by a quarter of a century”**

by his sister Ashraf but opposed by a vocal opposition that included Ayatollah Sayed Abolghassem Kashani, an influential Shiite cleric, the communist Tudeh party and the nationalist-led by the 70-year old landowner Mossadeq. His government voted to nationalise the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) whose profits were safeguarded by London executives whom Col Woodhouse now describes as "stupid, boring, pigheaded and tiresome". In August 1951, Monty Woodhouse arrived at the British embassy in Tehran, the imposing pseudo-Greek edifice in which Churchill, Stalin and Roosevelt had met to decide the post-war world only



In the third of a series of articles, Robert Fisk writes about the fall of prime minister Mossadeq

eight years earlier. "My employers were SIS [Secret Intelligence Service] but my cover was the Foreign Office and I was on the embassy staff," Woodhouse says. "I think I was officially called 'information officer'."

The Central Intelligence Agency's Middle East chief, Kim Roosevelt - grandson of Theodore - would finally see the plot to fruition, organising the Tehran street mobs and the Iranian army against Mossadeq. But Col Woodhouse, fresh from his role as a Special Operations Executive officer in German-occupied Greece, was an enthusiastic proponent of Operation Boot and eagerly sold the idea to the Americans as a shield against Soviet subversion. "When we knew what the prejudices of our collaborators were, we played all the more on these prejudices," Woodhouse admits in his retirement home in Oxford.

When Mossadeq was about to break diplomatic relations with Britain in the summer of 1952 - and when Iran seemed to be on the verge of anarchy - Col Woodhouse was ordered to arm tribal leaders in northern Iran who could be relied on to oppose a possible Soviet invasion.

"I collected the light arms in an RAF plane from Habbaniyah, an RAF station in Iraq, and eventually landed at Tehran after losing our way over the Zagros mountains. They were mostly rifles and Sten guns. We drove north in a truck, avoiding check-points by using by-roads. Getting stopped was the sort of thing one never thinks about. We buried the weapons - I think my underlings dug the holes. And for all I know these weapons are



Mohamed Mossadeq, centre, at his trial on 9 November 1953 (Photograph: Popperfoto). Top right, Col Woodhouse; right, Allen Dulles, CIA director

still hidden somewhere in northern Iran. It was all predicated on the assumption that war would break out with the Soviet Union."

At this time, the plot to overthrow Mossadeq was in the hands of a British embassy official called Robin Zaehner - later Professor of Eastern Religions at Oxford. Zaehner, who is now dead, had cultivated two wealthy Iranian merchants, known as "the Brothers", each of whom had worked against German influence in Iran during the Second World War.

When the British were about to be thrown out of Iran, Col Woodhouse turned to Roger Goiran, the Tehran CIA station chief. "He was a really admirable colleague. He came from a French family, was bilingual, extremely intelligent and likable

and had a charming wife and we all got on famously together; he was an invaluable ally to me when Mossadeq was throwing us out because I was able to hand on to him the contacts I had."

Col Woodhouse visited Washington after Eisenhower's presidential election victory and outlined his plan to the Americans: Operation Boot was to use the Brothers and an organisation of disenchanted army and police officers, parliamentarians, deputies, mullahs, editors and mob leaders to seize control of Tehran while tribal leaders would take over major cities, on doubt with the weapons the colloid had dumped in northern Iran.

Despite initial reluctance by the United States, Mossadeq's rejection of a set of Anglo-American proposals to solve the oil dispute - and the danger

which he represented to the Shah - sealed his fate. While Kim Roosevelt travelled secretly to Iran, Col Woodhouse met with Princess Ashraf in Switzerland, she travelled to Tehran to try and persuade her brother that he should remain on his throne. A second emissary to visit the Shah with the same message was Brigadier General Norman Schwarzkopf, father of the man who would later command US forces against Iraq in 1991. After Roosevelt himself spoke to the Shah, the latter issued a decree dismissing Mossadeq as prime minister.

Col Woodhouse was in Japan when he heard how the mobs took to the streets against Mossadeq and of how the subsequent street fighting cost the lives of 300 people. "It was all Mossadeq's fault," he says now. "He was ordered by the Shah's

"firman" to leave. He called out his own thugs and he caused all the bloodbath. Our lot didn't - they behaved according to plan. "What if we'd done nothing? It's a very difficult question to answer. What would relations have been between Mossadeq and the mullahs? Things would have got steadily worse. There would have been no restoration of BP - or AIOC as it then was. And the Shah would have been overthrown immediately, instead of 35 years later."

Col Woodhouse was already in retirement when the Islam-

ic revolution changed Iran forever. "I felt very depressed," he says. "I felt that the work we had done was wasted, that a sort of complacency had taken over once the Shah had been restored. Things were taken for granted too easily."

Cut off from the intelligence world in which he once lived, Colonel Woodhouse, who was elected Tory MP for Oxford in 1959, is now translating a work of modern Greek history by his late wartime friend Panayotis Kanellopoulos. But he has not forgotten what Allen Dulles, the CIA director, said to him on his return to Washington in 1953. "That was a nice little egg you laid when you were here last time!" he told Woodhouse. It was the first such operation carried out by the Americans in the Cold War - and the last by the British.

ic revolution changed Iran forever. "I felt very depressed," he says. "I felt that the work we had done was wasted, that a sort of complacency had taken over once the Shah had been restored. Things were taken for granted too easily."



## Congress protests at China's rising crime

Teresa Poole  
Peking

China's normally compliant parliament yesterday barked back, emboldened by widespread public dissatisfaction with crime and corruption. Delegates to the National People's Congress (NPC) registered their biggest ever protest vote when 40 per cent did not support the annual report of China's top prosecutor, Zhang Siquing, who just days earlier had promised "to get to the bottom" of cases involving any corrupt officials.

When the result was displayed on the electronic screen in the Great Hall of the People a wave of murmuring swept through the 2,720 delegates as they read the voting figures.

The unprecedented show of displeasure at the government's inability to tackle rising crime and corruption was also evident in the vote on the annual work report from the president of the Supreme People's Court, Ren Jianmin, with one-third of delegates withholding their support. As China embarks on the post-Deng Xiaoping era, crime and corruption often top surveys of public complaints.

The NPC delegates vote by pressing buttons which give them a choice of voting for, against or abstaining; a number prefer to show their reluctance by not pressing any button at all. It is widely assumed that the government has the power to determine how any delegate voted on any particular vote. In yesterday's vote on the Supreme People's Procuratorate report, 1,621 were in favour, 675 against, 390 abstained, and 34 did not vote at all.

Western human rights campaigners might not be comfortable with the sentiments behind yesterday's anti-crime votes. Since April last year, China has been in the grip of the "Strike Hard" anti-crime campaign, which saw a 17 per cent increase in arrests, worryingly swift convictions, and an unknown number of executions. Yet, many NPC delegates this year argued in favour of tougher penalties and a wider use of capital punishment, and were disappointed not to succeed.

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## Shame is gangsters' deadliest weapon

Once a year, the presidents and board members of Japan's biggest companies submit themselves to an awful torment. Every June these unhappy people, whose decisions affect the lives of workers and consumers all over the world, are forced to present themselves publicly and - would you believe it? - answer questions from their shareholders.

The ordeal of the annual shareholders' meeting (*sokaiya*, in Japanese) is usually finished in double-quick time, although this is by no means guaranteed. Sometimes, horror of horrors, a shareholder may ask an awkward or searching question, or even express dissatisfaction with the board's performance. Worst of all, professional troublemakers set out deliberately to embarrass the mortified executives. They shout, they refuse to sit down, they make awkward allegations. Faced with this humiliating prospect, the MDs and CEOs do what any sensitive capitalists of industry would do: they buy off the trouble-makers, for millions of pounds every year.

The corporate blackmailers are called *sokaiya*, and in the last week their extraordinary place in Japanese corporate life has been dramatically exposed. Yesterday, the president of Nomura, the world's biggest securities house, resigned to take responsibility for a scandal in which the company apparently channelled hundreds of millions of yen to a company with connections to a former extortionist.

Three days before, police arrested two executives of a leading food company, Ajinomoto, for allegedly paying some half a million pounds a year to protect their president from embarrassing questions.

These are strikingly large sums for what is, after all, only a shareholders' meeting. In the past, *sokaiya* have punished companies who refuse to pay up by a variety of means.

In 1982, a Sony shareholders' meeting was prolonged for thirteen hours by filibusters; three years ago the president of Fuji Film had bottles thrown at him by a spurned *sokaiya*. But these cases are extreme, as the case

Japanese bosses will pay to avoid humiliation, writes Richard Lloyd Parry in Tokyo

of Ajinomoto demonstrates. Typically, the shareholders' meeting lasted just half an hour. In 1995, apparently because of a failure to pay off *sokaiya*, it went on for over an hour. However uncomfortable, those extra forty minutes saved the company 100 million yen (£520,000).

The *sokaiya* are a uniquely Japanese institution, a product both of history and of the almost medieval importance of form in even the most modern companies. Incidents which would be routine at European or American shareholders' meetings - stonking shareholders, aggressive heckling - are such anathema to the public image of corporations that they are prepared to buy peace and quiet.

"Japanese companies attach a great deal of importance to

maintaining the dignity of their senior management," says Ritsuke Miyawaki, a retired senior policeman, who now advises companies on how to deal with gangsters. "Actually, the bosses are a bit timid: if they are seen to make a mistake during the meeting, it's very shameful to them, so they want it to be as short as possible so that no one has a chance to ask questions."

In an attempt to frustrate the racketeers, companies have taken to holding their shareholders' meetings at the same time. These tactics have apparently worked: according to the police, there are about 1000 *sokaiya*, compared to nearly 7,000 before the change in the law. But since the passing of the anti-racketeering laws their methods have become both more ingenious and more brutal.

Three years ago, a Fuji Film executive responsible for the annual general meeting, ran into trouble with a group of *sokaiya*. Soon after, he was found dead, stabbed to death with a samurai dagger.

Nomura chief goes, page 22



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## international

# A view of the world coloured by fear of what the next century will bring

The man at the bus-stop started talking to me, something almost unheard of in Paris. I had Clare with me and he told me that he had a small daughter of his own. He had also lived abroad, confirming my wife's theory that the French (Parisians anyway) are much nicer when they have been subjected to foreign influences.

He was a specialist in tax avoidance who had lived in Britain, Africa and Washington. He spoke interestingly and pessimistically about the problems of the French economy. Times were hard but would get worse.

Since I had also lived in Washington, I asked whether he had enjoyed being there. "Ah, non, it was much too coloured for me," he said. Seeing my negative facial sign-language, he added: "In any case, it was too coloured for a French person."

The question arises: are the French racist? In the ideological sense of obsession with race and white supremacy, I think not, despite the Front National's rise. In the broader sense of cultural solipsism, even cultural intolerance, there is a case to answer. The French call it *nombrilisme* - preoccupation with one's own belly-button.

We have come across it our-

They have no interest in making connections with foreigners

selves. We have invited school-friends of Charlie's to come to the house, sending formal notes to the parents in the approved manner, and received no reply whatsoever. The parents who do respond have some kind of foreign experience or connection. They tell us the reaction of the other parents is typical. They have rigidly structured lives and an approved pattern of friends. They have no interest in making connections with foreigners.

Here is a seeming paradox. On one hand you have the overpowering self-satisfaction and self-confidence of the French. On the other, you have a nation gripped by a great crisis of confidence. The mood into which France has plunged in the past two years is composed of many things, but underlying it is a fear of the modern world, a fear that the French economy and French culture will be swamped in the techno-global world of the 21st century.

## PARIS DAYS

John Lichfield

The paradox is no paradox but two sides of the same coin. France is more worried than other nations about loss of identity because it thinks it has more to lose. It will have to speak to foreigners; travel abroad. It fears bad culture drives out good. Put more pejoratively, France is anxious about having to measure its superiority against the rest of the world on a daily basis.

At its extreme, as propagated by the Front, this has become a conspiracy theory. France is the victim of a conspiracy by the forces of Anti-France, comprising the Jewish lobbies, Freemasons, homosexuals, the Trilateral Commission, the European Commission and Jean-Marie Le Pen's new hugobear, the US. They are plotting to abolish culture and identity and replace it with a lowest-common-denominator world culture.

At some rallies, this view is promoted in Orwellian cadences: *croques monsieur* good, hamburgers bad; Orangina good, Coca-Cola bad; berets good, baseball caps bad.

One should not laugh too loudly. This is a new and effective way of extending the FN's message beyond the purely racial to something more amorously and powerfully cultural. It plays on legitimate anxieties but is based on a lie. The obsession, and it is not just a FN obsession, with a fragile, and threatened, French cultural purity is a distortion of history and a trap. The kind of stultifying inwardness it implies would be - already is - a bigger threat to French greatness than globalisation or illegal immigration.

France has always been strong enough to absorb influences from the world and be for ever French. France has much to offer the new global world. It will, arguably, also benefit from having its doors and windows opened wider and becoming less *nombriliste*.

This week I was in Toulon, a Front National-run town which has long had the reputation of being the most intolerant in France.

I was waiting, with some dread, for a Le Pen rally for fanatical *frontiste* pensioners.

I went in a café, which had check-clothed tables spilling into the sunshine. The *patron* and the one waiter were evi-

dently, but not aggressively, homosexual. Other customers included an Arab family who were on first-name terms with the waiter, two old men from a Marcel Pagnol Provençal novel who kept falling asleep over their lunch, a table of yuppies who chatted among themselves and into their mobile phones, and a group of women in their 30s who joked vulgarly with the waiter and pinched his bottom. The experience, and the food, inoculated me with a sense of well-being before I entered the rally. Despite its cosmopolitan *joie de vivre*, the café was unmistakably and incorruptibly French.



Burning issue: Riots in Marseilles against the Front National, which has extended its message beyond race to include culture. Photograph: Reuters

A FULLY GROWN GRIZZLY BEAR may stand over 9 feet high, and weigh in at over 900lb.

It's a powerful swimmer, a very capable climber and it can easily overtake a human. Unless, that is, the

human is driving a Jeep Grand Cherokee, where masses of torque and a 0-60 m.p.h. acceleration time of

under 10 seconds can come in very handy. (Even the Laredo turbo diesel gets there in just 13.9 secs.)

**Jeep**  
THERE'S ONLY ONE

## significant shorts

### Angry German builders storm the Reichstag

Protesting builders stormed the Reichstag in Berlin, traditional and future home of Germany's parliament. Five policemen were injured and eight protesters arrested. Their union wants an end to "wage dumping" by cheaper workers from Britain, Portugal and East Europe, and resumption of "cold-weather payments", which offered a safety net to those laid off in winter. Imre Karacs - Bonn

### Killer asks for death penalty

A Jewish man asked for the death penalty after being denied more time to explain how he was driven to kill his children because his ex-wife wanted to raise them as Christians. "My children cannot be Christians. I don't know if you can understand that," Avi Kostiner said. He testified for four hours about his abusive childhood, his custody battle and his reasons for drugging and killing his children. Geri Beth, 12, and Ryan, 10.

AP - Hackensack, New Jersey

### Dangerous profession

Twenty-seven journalists were killed in 1996, and 24 countries held a record 185 reporters in prison at the end of last year, the Committee to Protect Journalists said. Turkish prisons held more than a third of the 1996 total.

AP - Washington

### Vietnamese smoke signal

Philip Morris Vietnam, a subsidiary of the US company, was fined a symbolic \$2,700 (£1,680), and hundreds of its Marlboro posters, promotional lighters and cigarette cases were confiscated after it violated an advertising ban.

AP - Ho Chi Minh City

### 86 feared dead in plane crash

A military transport with 86 people on board crashed in a mountainous region of north-east Iran and there was no news of survivors, Iranian media said.

Reuters - Tehran

### End in sight for defector saga

Li Peng, China's Prime Minister, said a solution was in sight for Hwang Jang Yop, a North Korean defector holed up in the South Korean consulate.

AP - Peking

50 من الأصل



# Turkey rocks EU boat in struggle to get on board

Tony Barber  
Europe Editor

A sharp downturn in the European Union's relations with Turkey is expected to figure

prominently in discussions this weekend among the EU's 15 foreign ministers at the Dutch town of Apeldoorn. As Turkey presses its demands for inclusion in the EU, an open split has

developed between those EU countries which say the Turks should never become members and others, including Britain and France, which reject so rigid a stance.

The disagreement has begun to affect EU relations with the United States. US ambassadors in Europe recently received instructions to warn EU governments that the US had "very

strong views" on the desirability of keeping EU membership open to Turkey. However, the view that Turkey's European identity should ultimately find expression in EU

membership is clearly anathema in several continental capitals. Last week the leaders of Christian Democratic and centrist parties from Belgium, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg and

Spain bluntly declared that Turkey should not be a candidate for joining the EU even in the long term.

France quickly dissociated itself from the declaration. "It is important for the stability of ... Europe that the Turks retain a European prospect, even if we know that membership would not be realistic in the short term," said France's European Affairs Minister, Michel Barnier.

That view is broadly shared in Britain, which does not agree with some EU countries that Turkey's Islamic faith and heritage should disbar it from membership. "There is a very serious worry in the EU about the way the relationship with Turkey has deteriorated in the last few months," one British official said. "But we say the main obstacle is not cultural or religious. It is the sheer financial and economic set of problems that early Turkish membership would cause. It is a very big country and very backward by EU standards."

Hence Britain distinguishes between Turkey, which it says should be treated as a member of the European family and an eventual contender for EU admission, and central and eastern European states such as the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland. British support for EU membership for the latter countries is unqualified.

To accommodate Turkish aspirations, France is proposing a "European conference" that would bring together EU members with those states excluded from the formal accession negotiations expected to open next year. Turkey would be included in the "conference" group as proof of the EU's commitment not to leave it in the cold.

Whether this will be enough to appease the Turks is another

matter. Tansu Ciller, the pro-Western Foreign Minister, said yesterday: "A formation in Europe excluding Turkey will be a loss for the region and threatening to peace."

Some continental EU officials say that Turkey would not have received its public slap in the face last week, if the Turks had not threatened to block Nato's enlargement by linking it to their own desire to join the EU. Like the US, EU governments oppose attempts to hold the enlargements of Nato and the EU hostage to each other. However, other factors are at play. In Germany, which is home to almost 2 million Turks,

**Turkey is a very big country and very backward by EU standards**

the government would find it difficult to voice support for Turkish membership of the EU at a time when unemployment is at its highest level since 1933. Moreover, many EU governments believe that they would have fewer problems with Turkey if it were not for the attitude of Greece. Turkey concluded a customs union with the EU in late 1995, but Greece has persisted in blocking funds for Turkey that were supposed to flow from the agreement. At Apeldoorn, the majority of EU states are likely to urge Greece to show more open-mindedness, but few think a breakthrough is in store.

## US dismayed by threat to Nato's growth

Christopher de Bellaigue  
Ankara

"We very respectfully submit to our European friends that they must strategically think of Turkey as a European country and not send negative signals to Turkey."

Last Tuesday, a State Department statement affirmed US support for Turkey's efforts to join the European Union. Unfortunately for Turkish Europhiles, friendly Nicholas Burns, who delivered the message, speaks for a nation with no clout in Brussels and no seats in Strasbourg.

The United States is unhappy with the way things are going for Turkey in Europe. Washington dislikes the shallow philosophising of EU members who want the Turks to keep their distance. "Cultural differences", is how Jean-Claude Juncker, Luxembourg's Prime Minister, put it. Other Europeans speak of a "civilisation" in which Turkey has no place.

Such talk has united Europhile and Islamist Turks to decry the Europeans. It has also galvanised US officials into interceding on Turkey's behalf, earning accusations of meddling. Why should the US upset friends within the EU, and a Greek-American lobby of 4 million, for a hopeless cause?

The simplest reason is gratitude. For almost half a century, Turkey has made sacrifices in the name of American ideals. More than 700 Turks lost their lives in the Korean war. The Turks then provided Nato, which was more pragmatic about "cultural differences", with a vital first line of defence against the Soviet Union.

During the Gulf War, the Turks aroused Arab anger when US jets bombed Iraq from Turkey. Even now, Necmettin

Erbakan, Turkey's Islamic Prime Minister, allows the US Air Force to patrol Northern Iraq from a Turkish base.

But American gratitude is not all that arouses support for Turkey's European aspirations. The US, despite protestations, appears to have accepted the practical existence of a link between Nato and the EU.

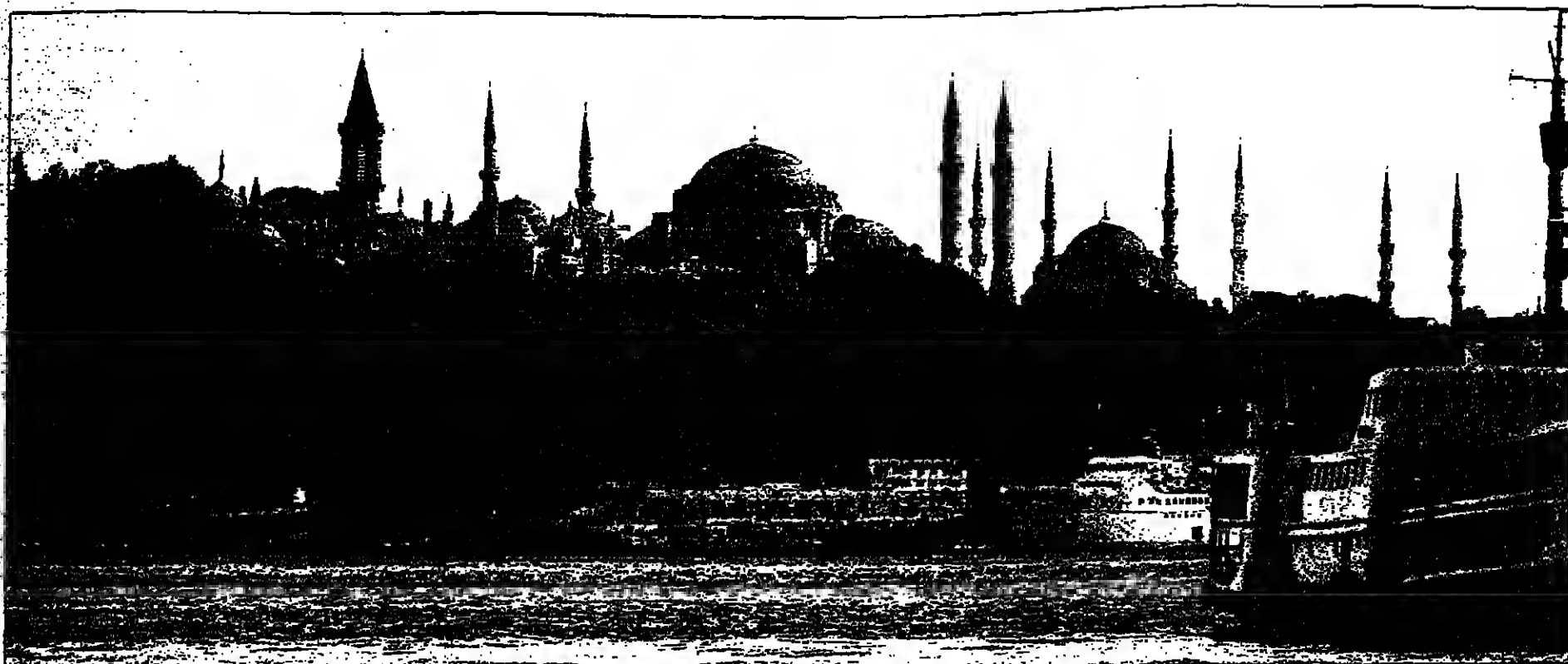
The EU says this link does not exist. It was raised by the Turks themselves, who threatened to scupper Nato enlargement unless they got good news on Europe. The Americans then delivered a threat of their own: according to one US official, the Turks face "a major collision," should they veto the Alliance's enlargement. On the other hand, the Turks now have the US lobbying on their behalf.

A satisfactory response from the EU is far from guaranteed. Europe and the US look at Turkey in different ways. The US has a strategic interest in Turkey, because it borders the Eastern Mediterranean, the Black Sea and the Middle East.

Washington's mediation does not mean all is well between the Americans and the Turks. One source of worry is Mr Erbakan's Welfare Party, whose members incline to Tehran. Last year, Mr Erbakan signed a £23bn natural gas deal with Iran.

The ties of friendship have also been tested by the Greek lobby in the US, which has hocked big arms sales to Turkey. The Americans have also begun toughening up their attitude towards human rights, now the Soviet divisions are no longer on the Turkish border.

In the short term, however, the Americans want Turkey's blessing for Nato's enlargement. The EU wants the same thing, though European sympathy for US methods may be less forthcoming.



SMBI waters: A riverboat crossing the Bosphorus in Istanbul, the historic meeting point between Europe and Asia

Photograph: John Voos

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**Ronald Gordon Fraser, actor:** born Ashton-under-Lyne, Lancashire 11 April 1930; married 1956 Elizabeth Howe (two daughters; marriage dissolved 1964); died London 13 March 1987.

**Douglas Johnson**  
Albert Gazier, politician and trade unionist: born Valenciennes, France 16 May 1908; Minister for Public Works 1946; Secretary of State to the President du Conseil 1947; Minister for Information 1950-51, 1958; Minister for Social Affairs 1956-57; married; died Vanves 2 March 1997.

not be examined under a microscope or observed through a telescope, nor exist. There is no such thing as spiritual: the non-material has no existence, it is said.

There is, I suspect, a general consensus over what are the basic motives: values such as kindness, faithfulness in relationships, respect for others, for the environment, for and for law. Recently the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority found an extensive agreement between people of different faiths and n

others, committed to building a better world, the outlook for our society is bleak. This is why spiritual vitality is so urgent, and why schools should be committed to the cultivation of goodness before success.

• *'Faith & Reason' is edited by Paul Valley*

• *'Faith & Reason'* is edited by Paul Völleb



# End of the road for the Tory camp followers

That was the week, that was, that the ruling class threw in the towel. No, not in Albania. In Westminster, the City, the Home Counties and beyond. It took a few days for the import of the Wirral South by-election to sink in, but now the Tory power elite has given up.

We record the visible signs on our news pages today. Edwina Currie talking yesterday of the "formation of columns and lines and factions and groups" in the leadership election which she wants to see as quickly as possible after defeat. The Tory columnists Matthew Parris and Boris Johnson writing about the certainty of defeat in *The Times* and *The Telegraph*. But there is a less visible change happening, which is difficult for daily or even weekly newspapers to record. It is the intangible shift of power from one community of government to another. This is the week to stand back, observe and wonder.

A community of government is a large body: much broader than simply ministers or MPs. There is a hinterland of influence-brokers around a government, irrigated by the flow of power. And beyond them, a whole social stratum which draws sustenance from the same source. For the middle classes of the Home Counties, bound together by complex, overlapping subgroups of company directors, financial traders, quango members, this has been "their" government. For 18 years, the public debate that mattered took place between rival sub-groups of this elite: between, for example, bicycling, tweed-

jacketed *Spectator* fogies and brash, pointy-lapelled Thatcherite businessmen.

For some time, power has been ebbing away from the Tory elite, but it is only this week that the tap was finally turned off. Suddenly, the Tory commentators find themselves on the outside, on the fringes of power. When they drink with Tory MPs, they are no longer drinking at the well of power. This week, they have started to realise that they no longer know what is going on. The people who will make the running are no longer their friends. They do not know the people who matter.

The cycle may be prompted to ask: so what? Has Tony Blair's success not been to build bridges to precisely those social groups that sustained the Tories in power? The whole point about the coming election, surely, is that nothing is going to change.

But this is a fundamental misreading of the nature of political change. If Mr Blair wins, the personnel of the power elite will change completely. It is hard to over-estimate the impact, if he really does win, that this will have.

As the Chancellor put it yesterday: "There is no option marked 'Tory Policies, Labour Men'." The new power elite is made up of Labour Men and Labour Women, and although they may start by accepting many Tory Policies, they will operate them on Labour Assumptions.

In part, this is a generational shift: the new elite will be younger, it will speak a different lan-



guage, it will care about different things. For example, the new guard will not give a moment's thought to fogeyish Tory reservations about constitutional change. For them, the only objections to reform are the practical ones of rival priorities, rival models of democracy and arguments of efficiency. For another example, imagine the pressures on Gordon Brown as he draws up his first full Budget. Of course, much of his room for manoeuvre would be constrained by the same factors that would limit Kenneth Clarke - which the shadow Chancellor has explicitly acknowledged by accepting in advance some of the key Tory tax-and-spend figures. But there will be a host of other decisions to be taken, many of which could be or become just as important as the top rate of income tax. It is possible - to put it no higher - that the networks surrounding Mr Brown will instinctively take a different view of green taxes, equality (a word that might cause sounding old-fashioned) and welfare dependency.

Much of this is difficult to predict in advance. Margaret Thatcher did not know in 1979 what Thatcherism would be like. The feel of Conservatism has changed several times over the past 18 years. It was fought over by economic liberals and social authoritarians, moulded by the practical need to sell off state assets, and twisted by the gravitational pull of European integration. It is probable that not even Mr Blair knows in 1997 what Blairism will be like. Its

meaning will be contested both within new Labour and between new Labour and old. Many of the Labour power elite are northern, even Scottish. Many come from trade-union and left-wing backgrounds, even if they hold modernised views. They are likely to clash with the new power brokers moving in towards the centre of power in the business world.

Some of this change could mean the replacement of one clique of cronies and courtiers by another. This newspaper drew attention this week to the empire-building tendencies of the shadow Chancellor, which are ominous for a Blair administration. We have also been sceptical about Mr Blair's relations with some multinational corporations, such as NewsCorp and BT. The character of the new groups to which power shifts will, in the end, depend on the character of Mr Blair.

On balance, this change is likely to turn out to be refreshing. The renewal that is possible if the rivers of power flow into fresh channels should confound the cynics who fear that the election will change nothing. The election may still be a month and a half away, but this week saw the beginning of a big change in the culture and character of British politics. Suddenly, Conservative camp followers are finding out what life is like when you are no longer inside the tent - plainly a humbling experience, particularly for those who have never known any different. But at least we know it will be good for them.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Lilley's funded pensions still lay a burden on the future

Sir: It is claimed on behalf of Peter Lilley's proposals for pension reform, (report, 6 March) that they offer the next generation "genuine security through a real fund for its pensions".

There is plenty of historical evidence that the advance funding of pensions does not invariably provide greater security than "pay-as-you-go" financing (this year's contributions being used to pay this year's benefits). One of the arguments advanced in favour of the French system of *repartition*, a collective system of occupational pension provision financed on pay-as-you-go principles, is the greater security it affords by spreading the risk over the whole of society and over the generations.

In France in the 1930s there was a system of funded private pensions. It was destroyed in the 1940s by the military occupation and the severe inflation which followed it. The government had to introduce a system of levies on the working population to rescue the elderly whose retirement savings had vanished.

I presume that it is just because there is a lack of total faith in the long-term security of funded pensions that Peter Lilley's proposals provide for a guarantee by the state.

It is also often claimed that the "personalised" funding of pensions increases real investment, enabling pensions to be paid without cost to future generations of workers. These claims overlook the point that over-reliance on saving for retirement could result in investments that exceed prudent investment market opportunities. A reasonable balance should always be maintained between "capitalisation" and "pay-as-you-go" in order to obtain a broad spread of risk.

In any event, it is hard to see how "personalisation" of retirement savings can secure the provision of pensions without cost to other

workers or taxpayers. All pensions are a transfer of resources from one part of the population to another. Any saving for retirement, (public or private, unfunded or funded) entails a claim on the goods and services produced by future generations of workers whether the claim is met through taxation, dividends or disinvestment.

Few would disagree with the notion that all economically active people should be encouraged to spread their own wealth from employment more evenly over their life by investing part of it, as long-term savings, in either employer-sponsored pension plans or personal retirement accounts. Few also, I suspect, would disagree with the principle that the state, as agent of the entire community, is the appropriate source of all social protection, including basic retirement income.

TONY SALTER  
Richmond, Surrey

Sir: The "burden" of pensions on the taxpayer is a myth that needs exploding.

Pensions, benefits and wages all derive from the gross national product, which is growing at around 3 per cent a year while the workforce gets steadily smaller in the ongoing drive for greater efficiency.

Pensions and benefits on average are much lower than wages for individuals, so that those leaving the workforce reduce their demand on the GNP, leaving more available for others, not less.

An equitable distribution of wealth from the GNP is a national concern, and the pension sector cannot be left to the whims of market forces and private insurance schemes, where profit-making is the main objective and total collapses can occur.

LESLIE A POPE  
Wolverhampton

### Bristol struggles with slavery shame

Sir: Many of us in Bristol are campaigning for a long-overdue acknowledgement of the city's connection with the slave trade. Over half a million slaves were carried across the Atlantic in Bristol-based ships.

However, Linda Bellos ("Four historic weeks in British racial history", 11 March) does little to help the campaign by repeating the myth about the *Harcourt* wreck.

The ship was not carrying slaves. They were black prisoners of war captured by General Abercromby's army in the West Indies in the war against France. The French had recruited many freed slaves into their army and navy. The prisoners were on their way to the Admiralty Prison at Stapleton near Bristol. It was normal to use chains when prisoners of war were being transported.

BARRY WILLIAMSON  
Bristol

Sir: I must acknowledge Britain's role as a slave-exploiting and trading nation because it is a historical fact - but will Linda Bellos acknowledge the collaboration of some African leaders with that trade, or the fact that Britain was the first great power to abolish it within her territories at the turn of the 19th century, or the role of the Royal Navy in seeking to suppress it in subsequent years?

We will only be able to live together in harmony if we face both the good and the bad in our shared histories.

R S FOSTER  
Sheffield

### Common sense on a foggy motorway

Sir: Francis Roads (letter, 13 March) points out that motorway speed limit signs in fog are frequently inappropriate because of the delay in revising them. But the nature of fog is that patches of poor visibility drift around too quickly for any warning system to react in time.

Common sense is a more reliable safeguard than warning signs. The big problem is that the normal visual clues drivers use for assessing speed and distance are absent. One way to keep out of trouble is to imagine a brick wall across the carriageway at the limit your visual range and to ask yourself: can I stop before I hit it?

J SEVANS  
Chesham, Buckinghamshire

### Scattered relics of British electronic achievements

Sir: T C H Going (letter, 11 March) regrets the UK's failure to present our achievements in the field of telecoms and electronics with a national museum. He may gain some consolation from the news that the Royal Corps of Signals is expanding and renovating the Museum of Army Communications at Blandford in Dorset through the generosity of serving and retired officers and electronics of the corps, the defence electronics industry and the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

The history of military signalling tells much of our nation's telecoms history, since many of the advances in



Desperate to get away: two Albanian men trying to climb on board a boat leaving for Italy yesterday at the Albanian port of Durres, near Tirana

### Children in peril as the line to Albania goes dead

Sir: It is frightening to witness the self-destruction in Albania.

ChildHope has supported a small and dedicated group of Albanians who are running a scheme working with street children which we set up in 1992, back in the early days of the country's emergence from the Communist regime. Over the last year, we certainly felt in our bones that something nasty was brewing in the country, but the ferocity of the

last three weeks has taken us by surprise.

This afternoon (Friday) we discovered that our daily fax or telephone contact has been broken. This has left us in London with a real sense of doom, knowing that the project, the staff and the children in their care are isolated and left to an uncertain fate.

We can suggest no quick-fix solutions, but clearly the West's expectations of Albania were too

great to be fulfilled in such a short time. It will be shameful if we all turn our back simply because the

Albanians discovered something called fraud in their headlong rush into the market economy.

It will be a challenge to help them pick up the pieces, and this time take our time about getting it right.

NICHOLAS FENTON  
Director  
ChildHope UK  
London EC1

### Local power must wield a veto

Sir: John Gray (letters, 8 March) is right to demand a debate on the merits of local government forming the electoral college for a reformed second chamber of Parliament.

The many proposals aimed at strengthening local government - from proportional representation to elected mayors - aim to mimic European and American models. What is usually ignored is that the strength of local government abroad lies not in its internal structure but in its relationship to central government.

Federal systems such as the US and Germany have constitutional constraints on the ability of the centre to meddle in local affairs. Senior national politicians in France depend on holding local office such as that of mayor for their success.

In all three cases local authority is guaranteed by a system which gives the locality a veto on changes which affect its status, through direct representation in the second chamber. Such a system should be considered by the Labour government. All the proposals put forward to enhance the status of local government will be irrelevant if they can be undone at Whitehall's whim.

Councillor DEREK ANTROBUS  
(Lab, City of Salford)  
Salford, Greater Manchester

Sir: Your leading article of 6 March draws attention to the "dearth of city-

wide democracy" to address London's choking public transport problems; and you note the difficulty of incorporating boroughs like Uxbridge "who, historically, have been most reluctant to be included" in London.

The high-handed way the GLC was abolished need not lead to uncritical acceptance of the view that most local government has now to be centred on "conurbations". Most people live in expanded villages. The inwardness that incubates in giant cities leads some to forget that transport links with the major air and sea ports are in just as much need of attention as those within the metropolis.

These considerations suggest an alternative: allow such outer boroughs as fear subsumption to rejoin the counties they were taken from. To the north of the city, amalgamate the counties of Essex, Hertford and Middlesex, having the council meet rotationally in Uxbridge, Chelmsford, Watford and other towns. To the south, likewise, join Surrey with Kent.

A "cleaner and fitter" Greater London could then concentrate on the prodigious problems of the inner city, while there would be just three major authorities, each representing a population about the size of Wales, responsible for thrashing out a fully integrated transport policy fit for the coming century.

DAVID HAMILTON

### Dawkins: the last word from a scientist

Sir: Perhaps the late, and great, scientist Peter Medawar may be allowed a last word in the "Dawkins versus religion" discussion.

There is no quicker way for a scientist to bring discredit upon himself and upon his profession than roundly to declare - particularly when no declaration of any kind is called for - that science knows or soon will know the answers to all questions worth asking, and that questions which do not admit a scientific answer are in some way non-questions or "pseudoquestions" that only simpletons ask and only the glibly profess to be able to answer.

(Advice to a young scientist, 1979)  
IAN FLINTOFF  
London SW6

An error in transcription of a letter published on 12 March from Canon John Inge of Ely Cathedral, produced the statement that "there is a shortage of religious people who could be relied upon to produce intelligent, informed and constructive contributions to any debate". This should have read "there is no shortage..."

### Hedy's partner in torpedo project

Sir: Your article (28 February) about Hedy Lamarr and George Antheil and their torpedo guidance system contained an error. George Antheil was not married to Hedy Lamarr. He was married to - and stayed married to - Boski Marcus, who lived until about 1981. George died in 1959. He was definitely a lady's man and no doubt a Lamarr lover, not husband.

As a pianist who has recently recorded and edited Antheil's piano music, I'm sure that George would have loved your story, since he made up a few of them himself (such as being eaten by lions in Africa as a publicity stunt before the *Ballet Mécanique* Paris premiere).

His son, Peter Antheil, told me in a phone conversation in January that Hedy and George gave the patent to the Navy out of patriotism, a fact that Peter and Lamarr's son have long regretted.

MARTHA VERBIT  
Newport, Rhode Island, USA

## LETTER from THE EDITOR

Now then. Sometimes one just has to apologise, fulsomely, abjectly, the brow sweat-beaded, shoulders holling, lips wet with penitence. On Tuesday, we went for Gordon Brown on the front page, reporting criticism of his team's leaking against other Labour MPs, and comparing the shadow Chancellor, in a photo-montage, with a character in the film *Reservoir Dogs*.

So listen, guys. I'm sorry. It was unfair - wrong - badly researched. It was in fact Mr Orange whose head we replaced with Gordon Brown's, thus leaving two Mr Browns, alongside Mr Blond and Mr White and Co. As I say, just bad journalism.

I'll say this for New Labour, it can still make jokes at its own expense. I was invited (non-paying guest) to listen to Tony Blair at a fund-raising London bash on Wednesday night. Among those present, and speaking, was Prescott. If the Labour leader paid him a handsome tribute, lauding his loyalty and forbearance. As an example, Blair said that Prescott had been travelling south from his constituency and caught the very end of a news bulletin on the car radio - something about the "decision to privatise state pensions". Cursing, Prescott reflected that he'd been cut out of yet another Labour policy shift. Only later was it gently explained to him that this was a Conservative announcement.

Meanwhile, all around, was the unmistakable murmuring sound of an establishment changing sides. Perhaps the most politically revealing sign-of-the-times comment came from another guest, whose firm specialises in privatisations. That company, once fiercely pro-Conservative, had changed its policy, he told me cheerfully: "We no longer back parties, we back governments." Phee! Just in time!

Reflections on titles, week two. Letters have come in both for and against the idea that *The Independent* should abandon printing people's titles - Lords, Professors, Drs and so on. Pros and cons arrive in roughly equal quantities. The letters against titles tend to be breezily democratic; readers who want them kept say we should give as much

information as possible and that, in the words of Charles Brodie of Warwickshire, getting rid of them would "add greatly to the dullness of nations".

For myself, I am resolutely irresolute. Many are simply out of date pomposities - if Roy Jenkins is better known than Lord Jenkins, stick with Roy. But it seems sensible to use titles where not doing so would confuse the reader and where they add really useful information. They are, or ought to be, little more than formalised adjectives. Tabloid papers, after all, have developed a utilitarian title language of their own. Not Mr Jones, but "Lout Jones". Not

Perhaps in future people will address each other using tabloid titles. 'Fine morning, Love Cheat McDonald'. 'Indeed it is, Wild Child Reilly'.

Miss Fox, but "Page Three Stunner Sam". And these are, in their way, as specific and useful as "Esquire" or "Mistress" once were. Perhaps, in the course of time, these will become fixed and traditional too; so that, in the 2050s people will unthinkingly address one another "Fine morning, Love Cheat McDonald". "Indeed it is, Wild Child Reilly".

On the other hand, I have been reminded that anti-traditional naming rarely works, while finishing a magnificent and harrowing book about the Russian Revolution - *A People's Tragedy*, by Orlando Figes. Figes recounts the names Bolsheviks chose for their children when they were "Octobered" (rather than christened). They included obvious plays on Lenin, Marx and Trotsky. But some, believing that the West was more advanced, chose any Western word to hand. Thus there were little Bolsheviks tottling around in the Twenties who answered to Traviata, Emhryo, and Vinaigrette.

Andrew Marr

### QUOTE UNQUOTE

This irresponsible scaremongering will not only damage the meat industry here in Britain, but will also damage our standing in Europe - Douglas Hogg, Minister of Agriculture, condemns his critics

The damage done to the English countryside by the Common Agricultural Policy is the best argument that Jimmy Goldsmith's Referendum Party possesses - Roy Hattersley, Labour MP

I like the dark one. She's the only one who shows any sign of intelligence - Lord Healey, Labour peer, what asked for his views about the Spice Girls

I do not believe power-dressing will happen again. This is not the time for women to be surrogate men - Lynne Franks, public relations consultant

I was always sure he would be 100 per cent successful because he is the first gay product that can be sold over the counter instead of under it - John McKitterick, designer of the anatomically explicit *Billy: the world's first gay doll*

This train will be going nowhere for seven minutes because there aren't very many trains behind us - announcement to London Underground passengers at Chancery Lane station

I'm not a workaholic. I'm lazy. I'm just time efficient - John McLaren, merchant banker, who has sold the book and film rights for his first novel for £1m



## the saturday story

The juvenile, the complacent and the snobbish cavort in shallow debates, and Oxford's students love it, says Peter Popham, after hearing the case for blondes. Where has all the politics gone?

On Thursday night in Oxford, large teenagers practise wheelies down the steps of the station, over and over again, the multiple competing bus companies jam the streets with their clashing liveries and the youthful population of this surprisingly coarse-grained Midlands town hunkers down for another long night of boozing and brawling.

Within the Victorian neo-Gothic confines of the Oxford Union Society, however, that world seems far away. One hears tell that in the 1920s, Communist members of the union, dressed in white tie and tails, poured out into the streets of the town and beat up members of the working class, with the idea of aggravating class tensions and thus precipitating the revolution. It didn't work, of course, and 70 years later the toffs and would-be toffs remain cloistered behind the red brick walls and leaded lights.

On Thursday, they gathered for a bit of silliness, the "Farwell" debate, last of the term and of the current presidency. The theme is not original: "This House believes that blondes have more fun". But it enables the union to advertise the debate inside the programme with a particularly lubricious photograph of Marilyn Monroe, and to dangle the prospect of a bevy of guest beauties, headed by Jerry Hall, before the work-jaded eyes of the membership.

At least Jerry Hall is the name on the poster taped to the front door, but in the later editions scattered around the building it is ominously missing. Yes, Jerry has come down with a cold, and the union has been hit by another in its nasty run of no-shows. As one of the speakers put it in the debate, submitting the departing president to his customary bout of humiliation, "Darnon Hill, Patrick Stewart, Sting, Jerry Hall - what an excellent term you almost had, Mr President."

The House assembles to discuss blondes and fun. We are here, while the debate grinds and grunts and farts its way to a sort of conclusion, to consider the question, does the Oxford Union have a job to do any more? Is it doing it? Or is it just a concatenation of puffed-up, prematurely pompous young Tories, best left to stew in their own juice?

Criticism of the union is probably nearly as old as the thing itself, which goes back 174 years. But the thing itself would not be worth the trouble of criticising if it had not attained a highly peculiar stature. This is a place where a bunch of undergraduates gather to trade prejudices, slurs and dirty jokes; but by some strange



# The state of the Union

chemistry of desire and image and determination, it is one of the most famous debating forums in the world: a place to which world-class statesmen, politicians and public figures, including Bobby Kennedy, Richard Nixon, Mother Teresa and Malcolm X, made pilgrimages while in the prime of their careers. They came not to recycle the usual speech for the usual fee (the union pays nothing but expenses) but to engage in genuine cut and thrust, to risk their reputations at the hands of student pipsqueaks, and sometimes to be brought down.

At times it was almost an alternative parliament of the young. Harold Wilson dispatched his foreign secretary, Michael Stewart, to defend the government's pro-American policy on Vietnam, and a torrid time he had of it. When he was president, Tariq Ali hosted Malcolm X, then at the height of his influence.

Hungry and ambitious aspiring politicians such as Edward Heath, Roy Jenkins, Michael Heseltine and William Hague seized the opportunities the union offered both to debate and to rub shoulders with the powerful and famous. Debates of particular consequence were regularly transmitted live on the BBC. It was the only student debating chamber in the world with such charisma.

That is the context in which the Oxford Union has to be discussed, because the place is still in love with and in thrall to its past. Even on a night

like this, the union is a cluster of diminutive buildings, comprising a bar with scarlet walls which are hung with old photographs, a large and comfortable library, and out in the garden, on its own, the debating hall, which from the outside looks like a small Victorian railway station.

Tonight the hall's entrance is filled with large photographs of foaming pints of Guinness (the beer is free to participants, within reason). Inside there is a high chamber with a balcony. The benches for the union's officers, who must wear white ties, are ranged opposite each other by the chairman's seat, as in the House of Commons. The rest, filling the hall, face the chair.

As it is as it has been for many decades, with one or two special touches just for tonight.

The husks of ancient eminences around the walls, for example, are wearing Union Jack bowler hats. A multi-coloured bouncy castle is being inflated behind the chair. One large Guinness ad has invaded the hall. A smoke machine has been concealed somewhere.

Of the matter of the debate itself it would be charitable to say as little as possible. Simon Johnson, an epicure blond youth, president of the Edmund Burke Society, who has conceived a perverse fixation on Nicholas Soames, is fluently funny and rude, in the preferred snobbish mode, speaking of the retiring president's "family tree - that's where he lives", and of his father, "a light blue, due to restricted circulation".

He is followed for the anti-blondes by a narrow-shouldered, carrot-haired geek in gold glasses called Charles Hoare, who has the misfortune to be related to Douglas Hogg (his nickname is Mad Cow). Hogg was president here, as was his father, Lord Hailsham, but on Thursday night's showing Mad Cow will not be following in their footsteps unless all his contemporaries are wiped out, perhaps by CJD. He mentions "homosexuals" and "lesbians" many times, like a 12-year-old, as if the

words themselves were intrinsically hilarious.

The only other speaker from the university is the president-elect, Sam Gyimah, who sports a blond wig (and a mum's habit) although he is actually black. His speech is no worse or better than any of the rest; but given the routine trashing handed out to the sexually divergent, one is pleasantly surprised to note that the House refrains from making jokes about his colour.

The other speakers included two women pretending to be mutants and two blonde page-three girls, one of whom, Joanne Guest, wearing black knickers and bra and head-to-toe fishnet, declares, "I can equivocally state, that I am blonde." Fionna Benjamin shrewdly sizes up her audience and treated them to her *Play School* routine, which went down very well. The only really perceptive remark of the evening comes from the comedienne Jenny Ross, who spoke of her play for Patsy Kensit "when she realises she's lumbered herself with a complete and utter twat for a fiancée".

Finally the lights go down, a strobe comes on, the chamber fills with smoke, and the president is carried away. I have rarely spent an evening more childishly entertained since the age of 10 - but Farwell debates, as it was strenuously pointed out, are always like that. A glance through the rest of the programme for the term shows, however, that it is not alone. Why, the equivocable Joanne Guest was here for a second night running (on Wednesday she fielded questions about how many men she had made love to at the same time). Other debates this term included such intellectual killers as "This House believes that the Beatles contributed more to British music than Oasis ever will", and "Enid Blyton's stories are still appropriate for today's child".

Devolution and Europe drew relatively big hitters and strong performances, and Lord Tebbit, predictably enough, was a massive hit. But much of the programme was taken up by the

likes of Fyona Campbell, *Coronation Street*, quiz nights, comedians, and the no-showing Sting. Increasingly, the intellectual and political pretensions of the past are becoming an empty pose, a tradition that must of course be perpetuated (like all traditions) but which for the sake of hums on seats is increasingly overshadowed by froth and nonsense.

The arrival of Max Clifford last year, with OJ Simpson in tow, was an augury of the way the place must go: more celebs, the dodgier and tackier the better; more book-launch tie-ins (Stephen Fry, here recently, could have filled the place twice); less and less evidence that the union believes in its guts that its amazing reputation is still relevant.

It is not surprising that many of Oxford's students have no time for the union at all, regarding it, in the words of one graduate, as "crapulous, shabby and pathetic". Anthony Howard was president in 1955, and as he sees it the union's decline is a function of the decline of the nation. "Something happened around the mid-Fifties," he says, "perhaps around the time of the Suez crisis. Up until then, it knew its place in the scheme of things. The problem is that the tradition it was carrying proved too heavy in the Eighties and Nineties. I think the union only really had meaning when Britain was a great power, and it's been looking for its way ever since."

So with the political and intellectual pretensions of the union growing threadbare, what remains are the social ones. No sign of decline there: "Snobbish, class-ridden, puffed-up, undemocratic", fumed one former non-member, "a place for teenagers who want to be middle-aged, to be their fathers before their time." It is an irredeemable place, where the complacent and snobbish go through the rituals that confirm them in their pride and privilege. It is going to last for ever.

Double first: models Joanne Guest and Debbie Ashby at this term's farewell debate. This House believes that blondes have more fun. Photograph: John Lawrence

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## jo brand's week

I have spent half this week in Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, at the Angles Theatre, performing a play written with my friend, actress Helen Griffin. We did it in Wisbech because the hunk that runs the theatre is a friend and also it's nice to get out of London and avoid the beady eyes of the London critic fraternity. I have had some lovely encounters with the residents of Wisbech, including an approach the other day from a very respectable middle-aged man who came up to me and said, "Jo Brand, I think you are a marvellous comedienne, and I say this as a man of the cloth." Good Lord, this is a bit of a turn up for the books. I have spent my entire comedy career assuming that I am *persona non grata* with the clergy and now I discover I've got a fan with a dog collar. Time for a rethink on my assimilation into the establishment I think.

It makes a refreshing change to see someone speaking out against the sickening commercialisation that has overtaken huge companies like the Disney Corporation. The ferocious marketing approach they take these days results in parents being

put under pressure to buy everything that these companies produce. And the links with other big organisations to push the product even more, mean we are saturated with the latest gimmicks.

Well, the family of Victor Hugo in France have had enough. They have seen the fruits of the great writer's imagination turned into pure commercialism by McDonald's and the supermarket chain, Monoprix. Esmerelda has become a Demi Moore lookalike and Quasimodo a rather Hobbit-like cuddly thing. In the days that we watched Disney as kids, the films were not accompanied by a whole range of crappy plastic toys. I am sure the protests of the Hugo family will fall on deaf ears as the great money-making machine moves on to the next venture, but at least someone is making a little stand.

Fat Germans are not happy and have got themselves organised enough to have their own congress. They have again asked Chancellor Helmut Kohl to become their patron after he turned down the offer last year. Fat people

in Germany are demanding bigger seats on trains and planes and bigger car interiors. According to my brother, who lives in Germany, Helmut Kohl's nickname is *Birne*, which means "pear", because of his shape, although his name actually means "cabbage". I don't suppose even normal-sized people would mind bigger seats on planes and airline companies would have to enlarge them all, because it would be a nightmare if people such as myself were led to the fatties seats at the back of the plane like lepers. Still, at least we might get extra portions at meal times.

Every time we have an election in this country, commentators tend to remark that it is the dirtiest one ever.



This smacks of a certain desperation and one wonders whether the voters will fall for it. I like to think that we are politically slightly more literate than the Aussies, but given the whole Blair hair-furore I have my doubts.

I am looking forward to this fly-on-the-wall documentary in a few weeks, which portrays a group of your average Tory supporters having dinner, unashamedly slagging off gays and black people, and happily denying that there is such a thing as poverty. Apparently, these diners do not hold back and I wonder why. Weren't they embarrassed by how horrible they would look? Stupidity, may be an explanation for their bravado, I suppose, and easier to stomach perhaps, than the fact that these people are actually proud of having these views. The programme was filmed in East Anglia where there are very few black people and doubtless few openly gay people. I did ask the audience in Wisbech how many black people there were in the town. Two, apparently. Having seen this documentary, one assumes they might well want to move.



## army bunk

Hot bunking, where one man gets in as another leaves, precludes most forms of sexual activity

## david aaronovitch

Just because Nicholas Spang says it, it doesn't mean it's true. On Thursday, after an adverse ruling in the High Court, the armed forces minister repeated his view that allowing openly gay men and women to join or remain in the military would affect its "morale, cohesion and effectiveness".

This is a big charge. As my friend (and Labour's defence spokesperson) Dr John Reid MP said to me in the committee corridor of the Commons last year, it's all very well for us liberal types to sit in our Islington wine bars and call down injunctions on the Chiefs of Staff, but what if having gays in the military really would mean that our ability to defend ourselves is undermined? Wine bars are uncomfortable places when under fire from a howitzer manned by a mad Albanian.

So we must take this argument seriously. For it does not depend on red herrings, like the "gays are no good at fighting" argument. True, one of the ex-naval gay men campaigners is called Duncan Leslie-Fraser, whose very name suggests a life spent dressing up and going to fancy clubs, but in reality Duncan turns out to be very brave. He and his friends are not chiefly concerned with choosing the colour of the curtains in the Naafi, or trying to persuade Galliano to design the next generation of battle dress. The annuals of history resound to the names of martial gays, from Alexander, through the Lionheart to General Kitchener.

But what about the intrusive relationship argument? You're in the thick of battle and you must decide whether to fire your grenade launcher in support of X or wield your combat knife to defend Y. Oh, and Y is your boyfriend. Poor old X.

Or the jealous lover variant: the crew of the *Memphis Belle* are flying over Schweinfurt. "Bandit at five o'clock!" calls the pilot. "Nail him, Chum!" "Not until you apologise for your terrible behaviour yesterday," comes the reply.

Two responses to this. First, just imagine how awful it would have been if, say, Montgomery and Patton had been jealous of each other. The whole Arnhem operation might have become a fiasco. Thank God they were

straight! But, more seriously, there is no suggestion that homosexual acts should be permitted, any more than heterosexual ones.

Which leaves us with the discomfort argument. As Michael Portillo put it last year, "People are working in a situation of absolute trust. They are living almost literally on top of one another." Given that closeness, if current servicemen and women get antsy with gays around, that might be enough to lower cohesion, morale and all that stuff.

A recent survey showed that particular areas of concern were sharing tents ("camping tonight"), submarines (the shape?) and something called "hot bunking". This sounds fair enough (who would not be frightened of a bit of involuntary hot bunking?) until one learns that this actually describes a situation in which, when one man leaves a bunk, another gets into it. Thus precluding most prolonged forms of sexual activity, rather than encouraging them.

And, above all, the showers. As one sergeant put it, "Men don't like taking showers with men who like taking showers with men." But wait a minute! We don't want them to like showering, because - if they did - we would not like to shower with them.

Which brings me to Dr John Reid's Shower Test, whose logic goes thus: we agree that women should not be forced to shower with men, don't we? And for why? Because they would be uncomfortable being naked in front of people for whom they might be a source of sexual attraction. Well then, doesn't it follow that the same women should not be forced to shower with other women by whom they might conceivably be considered desirable?

Mmm. But why then does this not apply to schools, or universities, or sports clubs, or hospitals, where we straighten may be forced - willy-nilly, so to speak - to become the unwilling objects of lustful stares? I often feel myself to be at risk of envious or strange glances in the shower, but I have racked my memory and I can't remember this ever having been a problem. Certainly not one that just turning around didn't solve.

So, Nick, turn around. If there's anyone watching,

# Mao and Deng are dead, long live shopping

by Reggie Nadelson

"He who does not get rich is a dumb bear," proclaimed Deng Xiaoping. I'm thinking of having it engraved on the way-

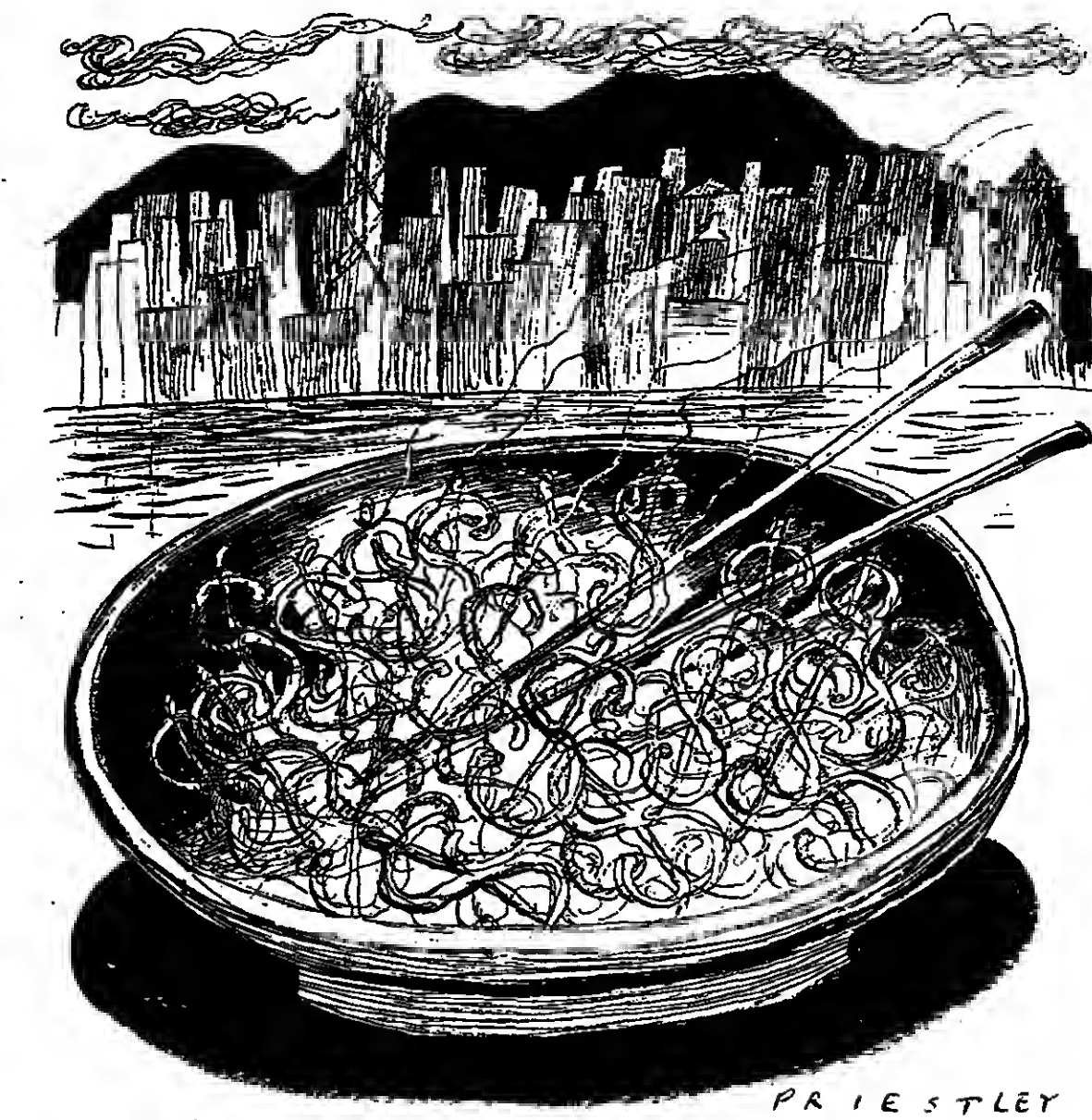
ing Deng watch I bought in Hong Kong recently. My watch - the little Deng smiling up at me, his clock-work arm moving up and down - is a lot more emblematic than all those waiting apparitions at his funeral. Sometimes I think all Communism left behind was the misery, the corruption and the kitsch - Gorbys toilet paper, busts of Lenin, Che berets, Mao on watches and on walls.

"He who does not get rich is a dumb bear." They should have put the slogan on a tombstone for Deng instead of crumpling him up like an old potato chip or a stale fortune cookie.

No wonder Deng wanted Hong Kong for his own so much. Money money money. And shopping. I've never seen so much money, so much stuff, never met so many rich people as in Hong Kong. "Hong Kong's the richest refugee camp in the world," an acquaintance said. "The parents or grandparents all ran away from China, from the Communists. Money's the only security, you can't have enough, you've got to keep piling it up."

I was in Hong Kong, in fact, to research the rich for a thriller. The American hero of my book is in love with a rich Chinese American babe. She's married to a very, very rich Hong Kong guy, a member of the New Comprador class whose only ideology is money, who knows China is the future and thinks national borders are a joke.

The old breed of comprador brokered gain to the East and all kinds of goodies (silk, spices) back to the West. This new breed, official or criminal - it doesn't really matter - broker everything in all directions, and the devil's in the detail: CDs, sportswear, computers, money, babies, illegals, body parts. What they really broker is the great 21st-century conspiracy between two ideologies built to destroy each other. Instead of fleeing Communism like their parents or grandparents, the New Compradors see shopping as the real ideology; call it global commerce if you want to get fancy.



PIESTLEY

Money money money. And shopping. I've never seen so much money, so much stuff, never met so many rich people as in Hong Kong

Chinese, and all have property outside China with passports to match.

The New Compradors - Deng was surely their godfather - are charming, cool and modern, having been educated in the US or Britain. They wear Brooks Brothers shirts, Italian suits, baseball hats. Some ride Harley-Davidson motorcycles. Others collect modern art. Most are married to gloriously beautiful high-maintenance babes, the '80s, the ladies who lunch, the most beautiful women I've met, and the most down to earth. They tell you "a full-time maid is the best Valium" (I met two ladies who share eight maids between them), and ask you straight out how much you make or what you drive.

The guys talk the talk and they can do it in soundbites appetising enough for the war-

est Westerner. But they are not Westerners, as one of them pointed out to me. I met Jack (we'll call him Jack) at the top of his skyscraper, one of those competitive architectural marvels Hong Kongers have built to their god. (Mammon never lived so well.) Charming, in perfect American English, "Jack" explained how the Chinese are different from Westerners. How they see things through different eyes, out of a different culture. I think he was saying we should butt out, especially when it comes to stuff like democracy. He doesn't have to worry. The West, with Bill Clinton in the lead, can't seem to do enough to know to the Chinese - just think about campaign contributions, just think about those nights in the Lincoln bedroom.

"To get rich is glorious." Deng is grinning up at me from the watch I bought at Shanghai Tang, a shop devoted to the marketing of old China and high-end Commie kitsch, and owned by David Tang, the chief cheerleader for the New Compradors. Tang speaks like the Queen Mum. Or Jeeves, maybe. He was born in Hong Kong, where his grandfather made millions with a bus company. His own father, Billy, was reputedly a gambler and race-horse owner who had a Chinese restaurant in London called Mr Tang's. David didn't get to England until he was 14; he barely spoke English. He learnt fast. He became a clubbable kind of guy.

"Made by Chinese" is Tang's motto. It's on every label at Shanghai Tang, where you can purchase silver-plated chopsticks or linens embroidered with coolies, and the hespoke tailor can whip you up a Cheongsam in luscious red silk or a pink velvet Mao suit. Tang himself wears a modified Chinese suit, call it Mao or Mandarin, and he smokes Cuban cigars. (He's the Cuban consul in Hong Kong, which carries with it the distribution rights to Havana.) As a businessman, Tang understands it's money that matters. He told me he

feels that it is only now that Britain has begun to pay money its due respect. But as Hong Kong's major domo to its social scene, escort to Fergie and to Di, Tang also knows that to keep things dynamic in a culture already stuffed with stuff, you have to broker not just hard cash but style.

Tang is a master of the art of the theme park. At Shanghai Tang and at his China Club, where the Hong Kong rich drink hubbly at the Long March Bar, he plays off our feverish dreams of the Orient that never was. Noel Coward meets Indiana Jones.

The mystery of the Orient. The Shanghai of the Thirties when Noel Coward did sit around the Cathay Hotel writing *Private Lives*, when there were evil gangsters and beautiful women, Orson Welles and Rita Hayworth. Somerset Maugham meets Mao Zedong.

"I hope to become the Ralph Lauren of the East," Tang has said, and as Lauren built an empire reinventing what he perceived as British upper-class life, so Tang is re-making old China. Tang's China Club - it costs around £35,000 a year just to join - is on the 13th floor of the Bank of China Building. It is alleged that in the had old days, hack before Mao and Deng got the new religion, Communist agents worked day and night here to destroy the running dogs of imperialism.

From the terrace of the club you can see the Hong Kong skyline. All that night. All that night. Hong Kong looks like it could burn itself up. Inside, by midnight, the club buzzes with beautiful people. Walters in Mao jackets pad across oriental rugs. Ceiling fans swirl, silver spoons glisten, there are red silk cushions in the dining room and silver chopsticks. And from the wall, in a huge portrait in oils, Mao Zedong beams down, benign, fat, happy in the presence of so much glorious money, as the club mynah bird sings tunes from Peking opera, or was it *Madame Butterfly*?

Recently I heard that David Tang is about to expand, moving into New York, maybe London or L.A. Mao is dead. So is Deng. If anyone had any brains, they'd make Tang the next real head of China. This guy has his finger on the pulse. He is new China man. The New Comprador. Tang is no dumb bear. He is, in fact, if you'll excuse the pun, one very smart coolie.

Reggie Nadelson's thriller *Hot Puppies* is published on Monday (Faber & Faber, £14.99).

## The strange death of political loyalties

The end of the party is in sight. Whatever the outcome of this election it will be the last time that political machines with labels will be pre-eminent in our democracy. In a generation, loyalty to political parties as we know them will be dead. And ironically, among the principal assassins will be the creators of the most fearsome electoral machines of modern times - Tony Blair and Margaret Thatcher.

It is no surprise that Baroness Thatcher looks so fondly on the Labour leader: he is, after all, merely completing a process she started - the remorseless subjugation of party interests to the will of a leadership that carries on a dialogue with the electorate, unmediated by the self-interested murmuring of party barons.

This is not just another way of saying that there is now no difference between the main political parties. Life under a Blair administration would not be the same as life under a Major government. Labour looks as though it may be even tougher on public spending than the Tories. Blair's constitutional ambitions are radically different to Major's. And their styles of government will be marked by a huge generational difference, reflecting an average age difference between the Labour and Tory top teams of several years. There is clear water available here for anyone who looks.

However, voting is not only about a rational political choice, or about economic self-interest. It is also a cultural act. For most of this century, people have tended to think of them-



Trevor Phillips

The single large party expressing a united view seems ridiculous today. What is the Labour or Tory line on cloning?

selves as belonging either to a Tory or a Labour tradition. You were either working class or middle class. Voting for the other lot seemed eccentric, even indecent; the sort of act reserved for snooty little madams who had got above themselves, or for eternally idealistic Fabian types.

Even non-traditional groupings have their prejudices. Indian voters have what used to be thought of as a super-conservative profile - more affluent, better-educated, entrepreneurial. Their homes, cars and private schooling shout "Tory voter". Yet they resolutely continue to choose Labour in huge numbers. Why? Because, in spite of Mr Major's own clean bill of health on the issue, they still regard the Conservatives as terminally infected by racial bias.

New loyalties can be created, but there is something more fundamental going on. Although the growth in support for single-issue pressure groups is often overstated, it is none the less significant. The pollsters tell us that three out of five young people won't show up at the voting booth unless someone promises free Oasis albums on production of a completed voting slip. The cultural ties are not being rebuilt or transferred; they are simply wearing thin, to the point of invisibility.

The personal triumph of both Blair and Thatcher lies precisely in hastening this cultural fragmentation. She persuaded the lower middle classes, increasingly out of sorts with a workerist Labour party, that they could happily vote Tory. Similarly, Blair seems to have convinced the new middle classes that they can retain their iden-

tity, but still share his aims. Indeed, the notorious focus groups no doubt show that much of Blair's appeal lies in the fact that he is not rooted in any of the great Labour traditions - he is not Fabian intellectual, nor union apparition, nor even regional baron. What he is, it is new. But it is *him*, and what he is, not his party, that counts to Labour's new converts.

One consequence is that political parties are in danger of becoming virtually useless as a ready-made means of defining our stance on some big issues. How does the Labour-Tory divide help us to define where we stand on Europe? It does not. On crime or education? On the advances in technology that have produced cloning and new methods of reproduction? MPs will search in vain for a coherent philosophical position from their party HQs.

Political parties represent historical identities. Those historical identities become more evidently anachronistic every week, and the single large party that claims coherently to express a united view on every large question looks more ridiculous every day. As the work of the think-tank Demos and others has shown, we are now a people of multiple identities. We are workers, but we are also shareholders; we are Scots or Londoners, but we are also Britons and Europeans. A political process that tries to force us to suppress all but one of those identities is bound to end up by alienating us.

But it doesn't have to be this way. We may even be facing a golden opportunity to revive politics. The most mori-

bund aspect of our political system is local government, all too often populated by anoraks, hacks and careerists. Our towns and cities deserve better than to be run by people whose main qualification is the ability or desire to give up time to sit on committees. This week, the Fabian Society published a pamphlet, co-authored by the MP Margaret Hodge, supporting the concept of mayors directly elected by the voters. In London, this approach is supported by three quarters of the electorate. More importantly, Tony Blair likes it. It is, however, hated by the party machines. After all, genuinely popular candidates might be chosen; and then who knows what they might do by appealing over the head of the party to the people?

The danger of giving the people unfettered choice is illustrated by the fact that two of the bookies' top three candidates for the Mayor of London are clearly unsuitable: Richard Branson and myself. But while our own capital languishes for want of leadership, its competitor New York's revival has been engineered by a multi-party administration. The mayor is Republican, but his chosen deputy is a Democrat.

Every day brings a new proposal that will loosen the grip of party discipline on the throat of politics. Increasingly, that grip feels more like the last convulsive clutch of a dying man. Proportional representation, devolution, the willingness of MPs to abandon the whip are more than straws in the wind. They are the harbingers of a new and more interesting way of running our lives.

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# business & city

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## Bonfield could get £550,000 BT bonus

Chris Godsmark  
Business Correspondent

Sir Peter Bonfield, chief executive of British Telecom, could gain long-term share bonuses worth almost £550,000 for the 14 months since he joined the company, according to documents mailed to shareholders this week.

The information is revealed in the listing particulars sent to BT's 2.1 million investors giving details of the proposed £1.8bn merger with MCI, the US long-distance phone carrier. They show that by 27 February 1996, when BT moved to BT from computer giant ICL in January 1996, could be granted a maximum of 125,137 shares in the company depending on performance targets under the executive Long Term Remuneration Plan (LTRP).

Participants in the scheme, which has been criticised by large shareholders, have to wait five years before receiving the shares. Based on BT's share price of 437p during trading yesterday, Sir Peter's maximum award would be worth £546,849. Sir Peter's minimum possible share award earned so far is 20,856 shares worth £91,141.

The possible award comes on top of Sir Peter's basic salary, which rose by £95,000 from January to £370,000 and an annual cash bonus.

BT has denied speculation this week that some short-term bonuses, which are agreed this month by the executive pay committee, could be raised to as much as 100 per cent of basic pay to reflect the achievement of the MCI deal.

The LTRP began in September 1994, replacing an executive share option scheme which had

run since BT privatisation. Members have to invest a percentage of their annual bonus, which then multiplies depending on how BT shares perform in the 100-share index.

The maximum award comes if BT shares are in the top 40 in the index over five years. It was intended to cover about 40 senior executives and by last month some 2.7 million shares had been provisionally allocated.

The other main beneficiary listed in the document is Robert Brace, finance director, who unlike Sir Peter joined the scheme at the outset. He stands to earn between £132,647 and £739,233 from the LTRP, which gives him between 30,354 and 169,161 shares, based on yesterday's share price.

Sir Iain Vallance, chairman, is not a member of the scheme, although he has 237,883 share options outstanding from the previous scheme.

Anne Simpson, joint managing director of the shareholder advisory group Pirc, was one of the main critics of the LTRP.

She said: "We advised clients at the annual meeting in 1995 that the scheme was too lenient. The performance targets were relatively low and the multiplier effect of the plan, we calculated, could give participants up to seven times their own investment in shares through a complex formula."

A BT spokeswoman defended the LTRP yesterday, claiming it was in line with industry best practice. "It's always been judged to be more taxing than many schemes because employees have to stay with it for five years and stay with the company for five years."

## City workers shun formality to swap office garb for Red Nose Day celebration



Noses have it: St Paul's Cathedral provides the backdrop for a fun run by London workers raising funds for Comic Relief, which last night was on course to beat its £22m target. Elsewhere, office workers dressed down for the day. Photograph: Brian Harris

## Sorrell set to collect another share windfall

Patrick Toohy

Martin Sorrell, chief executive of advertising giant WPP, is in line to scoop another share bonanza on Monday, worth £3.2m at last night's closing price, under a reward scheme that could net him £25m over five years. The issue of 1.2 million free shares, which Mr Sorrell must keep until September 1999, will represent the second of up to four bumper payouts that he will receive if WPP hits certain performance targets.

Mr Sorrell will collect his latest windfall because WPP's share price has been above 230p for 60 consecutive trading days. Last September Mr Sorrell picked up his first tranche of 1.2 million shares after

WPP's shares stayed above a 198p trigger price for the same period. He could qualify for a third share bonus as early as June because another 60-day clock started ticking on Thursday when WPP's shares went back above a new trigger price of 265p. Last night WPP closed 3.5p lower at 272.5p, valuing the company at just over £2bn.

However analysts said a third payout was not imminent. "The market will make sure he only gets one lot of shares each year, just to ensure he keeps performing," said one broker.

At the time the share incentive scheme was approved two years ago WPP's remuneration committee said the conditions attached would be "nearly impossible" to achieve.

Mr Sorrell, who has invested more than £2m of his own money in WPP's shares, also has salary benefits, bonuses and previously awarded share options that could push his five-year total to £25m, of which £14m will be in free shares.

Some institutional investors have criticised the package as appearing to reward Mr Sorrell for merely returning WPP's shares to the level they were at when he joined the company in 1985. WPP's share price peaked at over 900p in 1987 before collapsing to just 27p five years later.

But a series of financial restructurings allowed WPP to stage a recovery and last year it reported pre-tax profits of £153.3m compared to just £8m in 1992.

## Lex chief's pay soars by 17%

Sir Trevor Chinn, chairman of Lex Service, saw his total pay jump by 16.9 per cent to £453,667 in 1996, according to the car dealership group's latest annual report and accounts.

The accounts also show that Sir Trevor, who split the roles of chairman and chief executive last year, received a £60,126 performance-related bonus.

Andrew Harrison, who joined as chief executive from Courtlands in September, received a total of £129,413, which also included a £13,750 bonus. He was also granted 128,534 share options exercisable in 1999 at a price of 389p each. Lex shares closed yesterday at 330p, down 1.5p.

The second-highest paid board member was Peter Har-

ris, finance director, with his remuneration rising from £209,371 to £253,927.

The pay increases came in a year when group profits before exceptional items increased by 22 per cent to £51.2m, while earnings jumped by 14 per cent to 31.3p per share. Dividends were increased from 15p to 16p.

In his first review of the business, Mr Harrison said in the annual report that while returns from Lex Retail improved during 1996, they remained "inadequate".

He said there would be further changes in the structure of car dealerships "as manufacturers react to over-capacity and changing consumer behaviour by creating larger marketing territories".

## Three staff leave NatWest

Michael Harrison

NatWest Markets, which has suspended five senior staff over the £90m options mis-pricing scandal, yesterday parted company with another three senior executives following a shake-up in its global debt markets division.

Johan Hattingh, head of European fixed income, and Alby Cator, managing director of European primary markets, have left the investment bank as a result of the changes. Separately, Roger Nagloff, head of European equity trading and derivatives, has quit to join Lehman Brothers.

The overhaul follows NatWest's acquisition last year of the US bond house Greenwich Capital and the creation of a new global debt markets division. NatWest stressed, however, that the changes were not connected with the mis-pricing scandal which has resulted in bonuses worth £8m being docked from a handful of employees numbering between five and 10.

The bank's new global debt markets division will be run by Gary Holloway and Chip Kruger, both of whom worked for Greenwich Capital. Mr Holloway will be responsible for US and Asian operations while Mr Kruger will be based in London and be in charge of European debt market operations.

As part of the management changes announced on Thursday following the disclosure of losses in NatWest's interest rate options business, Vincent Tomasi is switching from being head of US debt capital markets in New York to take over as acting head of global debt derivatives in London.

A spokeswoman said the changes, announced to staff on Thursday, played to the strengths of NatWest and Greenwich and would improve the operation of the debt markets division.

However, others point to low morale and say that several staff are keen to depart following the shadow cast by the options mis-pricing episode.

In the first in a series of weekly reports 'The Independent' assesses market perceptions of prospects for EMU

## Big questions remain unanswered on Europe's monetary 'big bang'

In just 656 days, European countries plan to lock their exchange rates, abandon their currencies and commence a great monetary experiment that will affect economies and financial markets across the developed world.

But huge questions remain to be answered. Who will be in and out? How strong or weak will the new currency be? Will it work in practice, or is it so badly designed that it could collapse under its own contradictions?

Each week the *Independent* will be reviewing these questions in the countdown to EMU. We will follow the changes in the financial markets, and publish the results of our regular poll of European analysts - the people who follow the week-by-week developments in most detail - on EMU's progress.

The graph (see right) that we will be updating each week shows the latest financial market views. Over the last two years traders have been betting on a broad-based EMU beginning at the end of the century.

Since 1995, long-term interest rates in Italy, Spain, and Ireland have converged towards German interest rates at an astonishing rate. But the last few months tell a very different

COUNTDOWN TO EMU 656 DAYS TO GO



by Yvette Cooper

story. Rumours of delays and new jitters about the state of the Italian economy have increased the volatility in European bond markets. Moreover the trigger for a sudden change in the markets is as likely to be some new piece of economic data, as it is a statement of intent from a politician or banker.

Bruce Kasman of JP Morgan said: "The German government has placed great emphasis on the Maastricht criteria partly to convince the German public that EMU will be strong and fiscally prudent, but also to draw a line between countries that should be in or out." As a result, European statistics which provide clues about how close each country will come to the Maastricht criteria have become extremely important to the markets. But it is no longer

clear that the criteria will be enough to distinguish between Germany's preferences.

Stephen King of HSBC James Capel said: "The chance of Germany making the Maastricht deficit criterion has fallen." German unemployment figures last month increased fears that it would not be able to bring borrowing down, and might itself fail the Maastricht deficit test of 3 per cent. Should that happen, and should Spanish and Italian borrowing come in at a similar level, it will be politically much harder to keep Spain and Italy out. However, letting them in - especially if they all fail the Maastricht tests - raises the chance of the German public rejecting the entire project, as well as making EMU a more risky economic project.

Spanish inflation this week was much lower than expected, leading Bruce Kasman to conclude: "We think Spain will be in and Italy will be out." But while confidence in Spanish entry has increased, analysts are more dubious about Italy. Italian bond and currency markets have been particularly jittery as a result.

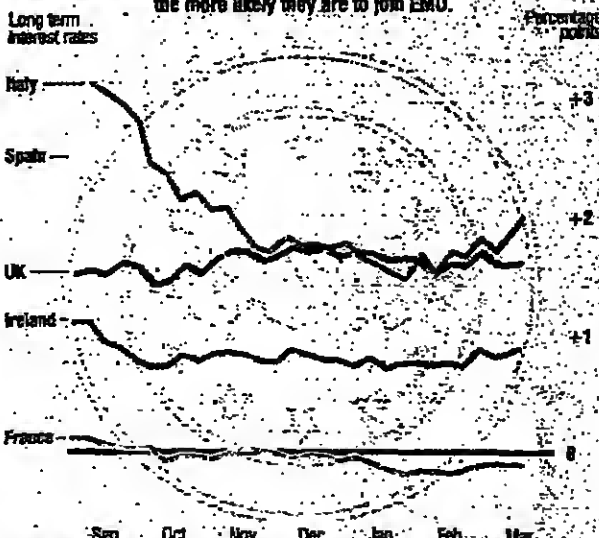
Philip Chitty of ABN Amro said: "We expect that it will still be possible to draw a distinct line between the core European countries on the one hand and the Mediterranean countries like Italy and Spain on the other. We are far from convinced that Spanish and Italian convergence is sustainable."

Within the last two weeks, new data on the German economy suggest the economy is picking up after all, putting the Maastricht limit within reach after all.

Graham Bishop of Salomon Brothers said: "If Germany can't get its government spending under control it will look as though it lacks the political will. And that could trigger a political crisis across Europe." The political statements and the economic statistics of the next few months could have a huge impact on the direction in which Europe heads.

## Who will be in EMU? The financial markets' view

The closer other countries get to the thick black baseline (Germany), the more likely they are to join EMU.



TOWARDS EMU: If the line moves towards the German base line it means investors no longer regard such a high premium for holding that country's bonds compared to German ones, because they are confident the currency won't devalue against the Mark. In other words, they think that country will be locked into a single currency with Germany in ten years' time.

AWAY FROM EMU: However, if they think the country won't be in EMU, that it will have higher inflation, and that there is a risk of a future devaluation against the Mark, then they will demand an extra premium for holding that country's bonds, so the line will move away from the base.

## When will EMU start? The City Analysts' View

Probability EMU starts on time: 54%  
Probability EMU is delayed: 24%  
Probability EMU never happens: 12%

The *Independent* asked analysts from:

HNB Europe, Polina Webber, ABN Amro, JP Morgan, Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, Salomon Brothers, Goldman Sachs, HSBC James Capel.

What probability they placed on EMU starting on time.



Disgraced: Masashi Suzuki, the Nomura chairman (left), and the resigning president Hideo Sakamaki

## Nomura head bows out with public apology

Richard Lloyd Parry  
Tokyo

The president of Nomura Securities resigned yesterday, a week after admitting that his company made illegal payments to the family of a gangster and amid rumours of similar misconduct at other Japanese brokerages.

Hideo Sakamaki announced his resignation to "take responsibility" for the scandal, although he has denied any personal involvement and will remain attached to Nomura as an "adviser".

He said: "As the head of a company which is responsible for what happens in markets, I thought it important to resign from corporate management. I am truly sorry," he said, and then placed his hands on a table and bowed deeply.

Hiroshi Mitsuoka, the Finance Minister, said yesterday that regulatory authorities would probably investigate other brokerage houses, after growing rumours that Nomura's competitors may also have been involved in illegal relationships with professional blackmailers, called sokaiya in Japanese, who extort large sums by threatening to disrupt shareholders' meetings.

suggested that the sokaiya-related company which was illegally paid by Nomura, also had accounts at Japan's other big three brokerages, Daiwa, Nippon and Yamachi Securities. "It's hard to believe the authorities will ignore such reports," said Mr Mitsuoka. "It's common sense for them to conduct an appropriate investigation."

Mr Sakamaki's post was taken over by Nomura's chairman, Masashi Suzuki, who promised to "rebuild the Nomura group and hand it to the next generation. By recreating healthy operating systems, Nomura will focus on recovering trust from all market investors and stockholders."

But things are likely to get worse for Nomura before they get better, and over the last week the firm has attracted harsh wide-spread criticism.

Reports in Japan yesterday

# STOCK MARKETS

## FTSE 100

## Dow Jones

## Nikkei

\*New Index graph at 1990 base

1997-1998 Period Index Base

## Indices

Index	Close	Day's change	Change(%)	1996/97 High	1996/97 Low	Yield(%)
FTSE 100	4397.70	-24.80	-0.6	4444.30	3632.30	3.66
FTSE 250	4720.20	-4.80	-0.1	4729.40	4015.30	3.35
FTSE 350	2715.20	-10.20	-0.5	2194.30	1816.60	3.60
FTSE SmallCap	2374.09	-0.11	-0.0	2374.20	1954.06	2.88
FTSE All-Share	6418.89	-180.48	-2.8	6153.94	1791.95	3.54
New York *	8678.89	-180.48	-2.1	7085.16	5002.94	1.93
Tokyo	17900.42	-282.79	-1.6	25666.80	17303.65	0.891
Hong Kong	12911.09	-202.04	-1.5	13868.24	10204.87	3.251
Frankfurt	3349.61	-65.59	-1.9	3460.54	2253.36	1.441

Statistics as of 14 March





JEREMY WARNER

The very high pay of top earners is not the main problem here; the more worrying phenomenon is the polarisation of pay between the well paid and the low paid, between the skilled and the unskilled

## Greed is the price we pay for free market economy

This was a week when executive pay was once more in the headlines, so it was fortuitous that I was able to lunch with Sir Ronald Hampel, who combines his role as chairman of ICI with the poison chalice of heading up the successor committee to Cadbury and Greenbury on corporate governance and executive remuneration.

His predecessor, Sir Richard Greenbury, left the post a deeply disillusioned man, believing that any attempt to enhance understanding and disclosure of executive pay was doomed to failure. Sir Ronald is a realist and shares some of those sentiments; he is not optimistic that anything he does will improve either media understanding of boardroom pay or sensitivity among industrialists to public opinion on these matters. But he believes strongly there is still a task to be done and someone's got to do it. So he is on a hiding to nothing, or can he still make a worthwhile contribution to the debate?

There were two stories in the press this week which highlight the nature of the problem. The first was one that appeared on these pages suggesting that Sir Iain Vallance and Sir Peter Bonfield, chairman and chief executive respectively of British Telecom, were in line for bonuses of £500,000 apiece after an "outstanding" year in the company's affairs. This was one of those stories which, though largely right at the time it was written, later turned out to be wrong, at least in

part. Certainly there are forces on the BT board, and on its remuneration committee, that believe the two knighted industrialists should be paid bonuses of this size and but for pre-emptive action by Sir Iain, he might have been offered one.

Documents sent to BT shareholders yesterday in connection with the merger with MCI of the US note that the remuneration committee has agreed to consider paying a "discretionary" bonus of unspecified quantity. Under the old system this could have been anything up to 50 per cent of salary, or around £250,000. However, there were moves to lift this ceiling so as to allow the payment of half a million pounds.

Not any longer, for in a letter to the *Independent*, Sir Iain has said that even if offered a bonus of this size, he would not accept it. I'm not sure I would have done this had I been in Sir Iain's shoes and it is a measure of how sensitive he is to these issues that he has. Sir Iain is that rare commodity, an outstanding industrialist who doesn't appear to be motivated by money, or if he is, he is certainly hiding it well. After an initial run-in over his first year as chairman of BT, Sir Iain has handled the issue of "fat cat" pay with skill and not a little personal sacrifice. His remuneration has always been reasonable but never excessive for someone of his position.

When the size of the bonus has looked like changing that perception, he has managed

to defuse the row by giving away large chunks of it to charity. His letter to the *Independent* is typical of the approach. By adeptly managing to sidestep the privatised utility "fat cat" row, he has done both his company and his shareholders a great service. Unlike British Gas, the company is still intact and going from strength to strength. The politicians and regulators have been deprived of the ammunition needed to meddle and shareholders can boast a company of truly world-class status. Who knows? They might even avoid Labour's windfall profits tax. Sir Iain almost deserves a bonus for it.

Ironically it will be successors who reap the benefits, for the documents filed in connection with the MCI takeover reveal that the policy of restraint is changing. Sir Peter Bonfield will get up to 125,137 free shares in respect of last year under a long-term incentive plan. Admittedly he won't be able to draw on those shares for five years, but provided he stays around, he's banked the equivalent of £500,000 at today's share price. Robert Bruce, the finance director, stands to get even more, and this is on top of basic salary and the annual bonus.

This, however, is nothing compared with what MCI directors and senior executives will get under the terms of the merger with BT. With the MCI people, BT has been forced to agree American-style incentives, enriching

their beneficiaries beyond the dreams of avarice. As BT moves from being just another privatised utility to the status of leading global communications company, the American remuneration packages will migrate, rather in the way they did when Boechem merged with SmithKline of the US.

The second story concerns British Petroleum, where a long-term performance plan similar to that put in place for Sir Peter Bonfield has been extended to more than 300 senior executives in the group. In total some £32m of free shares are being paid out under a scheme originally set up in 1990. As a consequence, John Browne, the chief executive, sees his pay for last year rise from £635,000 to £2.47m, while the pay of Sir David Simon, the chairman, rises from £121,000 to £1.12m. In both cases the hike is caused by the free shares. The interesting thing about BP's pay bonanza is that it is somehow made to seem justifiable, not just because an astonishing turnaround in BP's performance has been achieved in the past five years, but also because it has been spread among so many people. This is a clever trick, from which others will no doubt learn.

In the end, however, the issue of whether these very high rates of pay are deserved is a largely irrelevant one. The hiding up of executive salaries is a global phenomenon. Those who attempt to buck the trend will simply find they lose their best people to

those who don't. Nor can the problem be properly addressed through taxation: high top rates of tax would almost certainly stifle entrepreneurial innovation and drive the best people offshore.

The worst mistake, then, that Sir Ronald could make in thinking about how he is going to follow Greenbury is to believe there is anything that can actually be done about rapidly inflating executive pay. Greed is like the sun and the rain: it is part of the human condition and part of the price we pay for a free market economy. In any case, the very high pay of top earners is not the main problem here; the more worrying phenomenon is the polarisation of pay between the well paid and the low paid, between the skilled and the unskilled. In an increasingly global, free trade economy, that too is something for which there are no obvious remedies.

So it looks as if Sir Ronald is going to have to content himself with merely enhancing disclosure and transparency in executive pay. Whatever he does, executives are going to find ways of continuing to pay themselves more and more. The best he can hope for is to improve disclosure to a level that adequately exposes those who obviously don't deserve it. As for how he persuades the public that it is entirely reasonable for executives to be hiding up their market worth in this way, if I had the answer to that, then I too would be an extremely wealthy man.

## Profits of £290.2m cap 'excellent' year for United

Tom Stevenson  
City Editor

United News & Media capped a hectic year in which it merged with Lord Hollick's MAI by announcing better-than-expected underlying profits despite disappointing figures from newspapers, magazines and MAI's original money-broking business. Lord Hollick, the Labour peer who has effectively sidelined United's chairman, Lord Stevens, since the two companies' marriage last February, described the combined group's first year as "excellent".

Profits of £290.2m were comfortably ahead of expectations, driven by strong performances from United's television interests, where it owns the *Anglia* and *Meridian* franchises, and holds significant stakes in *ITV* and *Yorkshire-Tyne Tees*; and business services, its exhibitions to market research arm.

A 15 per cent rise in earnings per share to 40p (34.8p) helped the shares, up 30p to 770.5p, close at a record high since the merger. Forecasts of profits for the current year were pushed higher yesterday to a range between £310m and £335m.

Lord Hollick played down suggestions from the rivals it outbid last year for exhibitions group *Blenheim* that it had overpaid for the company. He said he was "delighted" by the £589m acquisition, which he said had a good portfolio of exhibitions and better-than-expected management. United won control of *Blenheim* by fighting off interest from Reed and Enamap.

Reported pre-tax profits were dentied by more than £200m of exceptional charges that included £62.4m to cover restructuring. Following the takeover of United with MAI, the charge also took in £32m of reorganisation costs at the

struggling *Express* newspaper titles, where the Sunday and daily titles were merged into a seven-day operation. £18.1m of integration costs at *Blenheim* and a £62.5m charge to cover the pre-launch costs of *Channel 5*, the new terrestrial channel which launches at the end of this month.

The effect of the exceptional charges was offset by a £149.6m profit on the disposal of businesses worth more than £300m, including legal publisher *Tolley*, sold to Reed, and the *South Wales Argus* group of local newspapers.

United owns 29 per cent of *Channel 5*, giving it the largest single holding in the station. The provision in its accounts implies a total pre-launch cost for the channel of more than £200m.

Despite the high costs of launching the channel, analysts remained positive about the station's prospects. One has put a

present value of £330m on *Channel 5*, about a tenth of United's £3.6m market value, and expects it to make annual profits of £185m by the end of its 10-year renewable licence period.

In national newspapers, which includes the *Star* as well as the *Express*, Lord Hollick said he was confident the group's relative decline compared with arch mid-market rival the *Daily Mail* had stabilised. He said a "good chunk" of an estimated £15m saving from a printing restructuring would be reinvested in promoting the *Express*.

According to Lord Hollick, United remains an "interested observer" in the unfolding stand-off between Granada's chairman, Gerry Robinson, and his opposite number at Yorkshire-Tyne Tees, Ward Thomas, regarding the price at which the widely expected takeover of Yorkshire by Granada should take place.



Delighted: Lord Hollick (left) and United's chief executive, David Arculus

## Shield on a dipper over trial results

Magnus Grimond

Shares in Shield Diagnostics, a small Dundee-based biotechnology company, ended a heart-stopping 600 per cent climb over the last two months with a high dipper ride yesterday.

Soaring to a new all-time high of 919p in the morning, up 114p from Thursday's close, they then hurtled back down to 507.5p on news that US trials of a new test for heart attacks had hit the buffers.

But the bulls who have behind the shares' amazing rise from 130p since the end of January recovered their nerve and late buying left the shares down just 137.5p on the day at 667.5p. With around 7 per cent of the company's share capital traded yesterday, the Stock Exchange was understood to be investigating the "unusual" movements in the price. David Evans, Shield's finance director, said the Exchange had "made due inquiry" after several one-day price changes of more than 10 per cent since the beginning of February.

The crash in the shares came after Shield announced that key trials in Houston, Texas, based on 700 patients who had been involved in a long-running government programme had been nullified by the mishandling of some samples dating back to 1986.

The trial, alongside another in London's St Bartholomew's Hospital, is testing whether Shield's Activated Factor Twelve accurately predicts heart attacks.

The recent soaring share price has been fuelled by a positive report on the trials - issued by the company earlier this year. But Mr Evans said precipitate - "gunge" - had been discovered in the samples, making them statistically invalid as a basis for the trial.

The company said it would be going back to those in charge of the trial to see if later data could be substituted, but he said Shield would go ahead with a briefing to investors on 24 March.

Analysis has suggested the market for the product could match the 500m cholesterol test kits sold world-wide every year, but others are highly sceptical. One said: "I think it is a classic stock market pump. A small biotech company with great development plans and you ramp it to hell and back."

## Inflation 'nirvana' steadies Wall Street

Diane Coyle  
Economics Editor

Shares on Wall Street partly reversed Thursday's dive after new figures showed the American economy delivering strong growth and falling inflation.

By mid-morning, the Dow Jones index was nearly 60 points higher at 6,938.16. The buoyant start helped London's FTSE-100 index end nearly 27 points higher at 4,424.3.

With investors using every

fresh set of statistics to try to predict whether Alan Greenspan, the Fed chairman, will decide to raise interest rates later this month, further ups and downs in share and bond prices look inevitable.

"The markets are living in fear. They are looking out for the next possible piece of bad news," warned Ian Harwood, international economist at Dresdner Kleinwort Benson.

The Federal Reserve reported yesterday that indus-

trial output had climbed 0.5 per cent last month after a 0.1 per cent decline in January. The capacity utilisation rate in industry edged up to 83.3 per cent.

Separate figures showed that prices charged by manufacturers at the factory gate nevertheless fell by 0.4 per cent last month, taking their annual inflation rate down from 2.5 per cent to 2.3 per cent. Even though much of the drop was due to falling food and energy prices, the core rate of producer

price inflation declined to 0.5 per cent.

This happy combination - described as "nirvana" by one analyst - followed news on Thursday of a surge in retail spending in the first two months of the year, and figures last week showing a leap of 339,000 in employment in February.

The pessimists who expect Mr Greenspan to opt for a quarter-point rise in borrowing costs after the Fed's 25 March meeting focus on the strength of the

economy combined with the Fed chairman's recent warning that he will take pre-emptive action against future inflation if necessary.

There was some evidence in yesterday's figures of higher prices in the pipeline. On the other hand the optimists point to the absence of any signs of inflation on the immediate horizon. This means February's consumer price figures next week will be the next focus for the financial markets' angst.

## Lockheed heads bid for air traffic control centre

Randeep Ramesh  
Transport Correspondent

Lockheed Martin, the giant US defence contractor, heads a consortium that became the preferred bidder to build the £23m Scottish air traffic control centre, it was announced yesterday.

Responsible for controlling all air traffic travelling over Scotland and the north of England, the new centre should come into service in 2002 and will replace the existing one at Prestwick.

The project, being funded under the private finance initiative, will, the consortium claims, net the private firms £600m over 25 years. The other main member in the Sky Solutions consortium is the Bovis building company.

"The new Scottish centre will increase capacity, enhance efficiency and maintain the highest standards of safety," said Derek McLauchlan, chief executive of National Air Traffic Services, which let the contract.

The centre is urgently needed to handle the sharp rise in air traffic forecast by the Civil

Aviation Authority, the Government's air regulator. "Over the next 10 years, air traffic is forecast to increase by 30 per cent and up to 50 per cent by the year 2015," Mr McLauchlan said.

Sir George Young, Secretary of State for Transport, will have to approve the deal. It may, however, never be signed. NATS, the arm of the CAA which serves aircraft in Britain across the Atlantic and half-way across the Channel, was forced to sign the PFI deal to get to build a new centre.

However, if NATS is sold to the private sector, it has an option to pull out of the contract and build the Prestwick centre itself. It is increasingly likely that NATS will be sold - as the £600m it would bring in is urgently required by the Treasury. The Conservatives have declared their intention to privatise the service and Labour has said it cannot be ruled out.

Insiders point out that the cost of using the PFI will mean that the centre will mean that the cost is nearly 200 per cent more than original forecasts.

## Railtrack director quits with £250,000 pay-off after one year

Michael Harrison

A senior Railtrack director yesterday quit the company unexpectedly with a pay-off which is expected to be in the region of £250,000.

The company said Michael Howell, who had been in the post of commercial director for a year, had resigned. The Railtrack chairman, Sir Bob Horton, said his departure was in both parties' interests.

Mr Howell, 49, joined Railtrack after a career in the private sector which included long spells in the US. His job was to

develop the company's relationships with train operating companies and freight companies. But his entrepreneurial style is not thought to have been suited to Railtrack, which operates in a heavily regulated environment where its income and charges are fixed.

Before joining Railtrack, Mr Howell worked for General Electric and Cummins Engines in the US, returning four years ago to take up a post with Arlington, the capital fund managers, before being recruited to the railway.

Railtrack said his business style did not fit easily with the constraints it operated under. But it denied rumours Mr Howell had fallen out with his chief executive, John Edmunds, over a deal with the freight train operator English, Welsh and Scottish Railway over access charges for new freight business.

"There was no big issue and there was no row. It was just one of those things that did not work out," a source said.

Mr Howell was paid £150,000 and was on a two-year contract. He would have been entitled to bonuses under Railtrack's incentive scheme had he stayed.

## BZW censured over Northern bid affair

Michael Harrison

BZW, the investment bank, was yesterday censured by the Takeover Panel for failing to disclose the existence of a £250,000 performance fee during its defence of Northern Electric against the hostile bid from CalEnergy last year.

The Panel said it accepted that BZW had not deliberately concealed the fee but said nevertheless that it should have disclosed it.

The existence of the fee came to light in the dying days of the bid, shortly after BZW and Schroders went into the market and bought a 2.6 per cent stake in Northern in an attempt to thwart the £72m takeover.

CalEnergy's advisers immediately complained to the Panel, which took the unusual step of extending the bid, thus allowing CalEnergy to receive enough acceptances from shareholders.

Had the bid closed normally at 60 days then Northern would have escaped takeover by a whisker, with the aid of the shares bought by its advisers.

The Panel executive said it believed there had been "no deliberate concealment" of the fee but criticised BZW for "failing to disclose all relevant facts".

In the event the fee was never paid. The episode provoked a heated debate about whether advisers should be allowed to buy stakes in companies they are defending - a practice which is outlawed in the US.

## The Index-Tracking PEP



WEEKS left this tax year to buy the lowest cost Index-Tracking PEP.

The closing date is 5th April 1997

0500 11 66 22

CALL FREE: 8am to 8pm WEEKDAYS and 9am to 5pm WEEKENDS. PLEASE QUOTE REF: A10J24

Legal & General  
Investment Management

• Edinburgh Food Managers has entered into a conditional agreement to buy back 2.645 million of its own shares at 565p each from British Investment Trust. BIT has entered into a conditional placing agreement with HSBC James Capel and Panmure Gordon to sell 7.53 million shares in Edinburgh Food Managers at the same price.

• St James Beach Hotels is in discussions with Barbados Shipping & Trading which could lead to the acquisition of a majority shareholding in Almond Resorts, a listed company in Barbados which owns Almond Beach Village and Almond Beach Club.

• Babcock International said its chief executive, Nick Salmon, had accepted the post of managing director of the power generation division at GEC Alsthom. Mr Salmon will leave at the end of May and John Parker will temporarily assume his role.















# O'Shea cautious about aiming Ballistic at Aintree

## Racing

GREG WOOD

It is a sign of the delicate balance within a racing programme built up over two centuries that change in one small area will quickly be felt elsewhere. Just six years ago, significant alterations were made to the Grand National course at Aintree in order to benefit the safety of the participants, but already one race which previously offered only rare glimpses to the Nation has overtaken any number of others to become the most important Liverpool trial of all. It is also quite a significant event in its own right: the Cheltenham Gold Cup.

No longer are horses good enough to find the frame in the Gold Cup considered too good to risk at Aintree. As Mr Mulligan passed the post at Cheltenham two days ago, far-sighted punters were focused on horses running on from off the pace, and one in particular caught everyone's eye. Go Ballistic, fourth on Thursday, would not have made up more ground from the home

turn if he had been driving a sports car. With just 9st 8lb in the long handicap for Liverpool, and every chance that the weights will rise sufficiently to get him into the handicap proper, his National chance was suddenly obvious to backers and bookies alike, with William Hill so impressed that he was cut to 10-1 second-favourite behind Lord Gylfene, a runner in today's Midlands Grand National at Uttoxeter.

As yet, though, Go Ballistic is just a probable, rather than definite runner at Aintree. "The horse has come out of his race in super shape," John O'Shea,

his trainer, said yesterday, "no problem with him being ready to run at National time, but I would just like to take a week to think it over. His only other option is

**RICHARD EDMONDSON**  
NAP: Shanagore Warrior  
(Langfield 445)  
MR: Carrylough  
(Uttoxeter 3.00)

the Whitbread, and as the weights are already out for the National, we'll have to have a good look at it."

O'Shea's principal concern is

that, at just eight years of age, Go Ballistic might lack the necessary maturity for chasing's most gruelling event. "The trip won't be a problem," O'Shea said. "The idea behind running him in the Gold Cup was that on any other track he wouldn't get a blow in against One Man, but I knew that if he could keep tabs on him then his stamina would come into play. Maybe he ought to wait another year, but then we thought that before the Gold Cup, and he was in such good form that I let him run, because you never know what next year will bring."

The expectation must be that Go Ballistic will be behind the Aintree tapes in three weeks' time, but a runner who has been favourite for the race, Coome Hill, was definitely ruled out yesterday. "He's got sore shins and it will keep him off for a while," Walter Dennis, whose runner was a former seventh of the eight Gold Cup finishers, said yesterday. "That wasn't his true form. Jamie Osborne said he gurgled at the top of the hill and with the ground as firm as it was he let him come home in his own time."



MIDLANDS GRAND NATIONAL 10 YEAR-OLD

## Judicious Captain to be popular order at 14-1

**FIRST SHOW**  
How they bet on today's televised races

Country Store is a top-priced 16-1 with the tote - William Hill go 12-1 - for the novice handicap chase at Uttoxeter (12.45).

Judicious Captain is 14-1 (Ladbrokes - the tote go 8-1 - for the 2.25 at Uttoxeter. In the Midlands Grand National Handicap

Chase (2.25) Sister Stephanie is 12-1 (Coral/Ladbrokes - the tote go 8-1.

Ian Davies

Horse	William Hill	Tote
Golden Swift	100-30	3-1
Self By The Stars	4-1	4-1
Tellurium	5-1	5-1
Harvest View	8-1	7-1
Wales Dorian	10-1	10-1
Conceded Call	12-1	12-1
Country Store	16-1	16-1
Debbie	20-1	20-1
King's Promise	25-1	25-1

Horse	William Hill	Tote
Lord Gylfene	7-1	7-1
Steele Dorian	7-1	7-1
Act The West	9-1	9-1
Midnight The Third	10-1	10-1
Sister Stephanie	12-1	12-1
Wales Dorian	14-1	14-1
Conceded Call	16-1	16-1
Country Store	20-1	20-1
Debbie	25-1	25-1
King's Promise	30-1	30-1

Horse	William Hill	Tote
Golden Swift	3-1	3-1
Self By The Stars	4-1	4-1
Tellurium	5-1	5-1
Harvest View	8-1	7-1
Wales Dorian	10-1	10-1
Conceded Call	12-1	12-1
Country Store	16-1	16-1
Debbie	20-1	20-1
King's Promise	25-1	25-1

Horse	William Hill	Tote
Golden Swift	3-1	3-1
Self By The Stars	4-1	4-1
Tellurium	5-1	5-1
Harvest View	8-1	7-1
Wales Dorian	10-1	10-1
Conceded Call	12-1	12-1
Country Store	16-1	16-1
Debbie	20-1	20-1
King's Promise	25-1	25-1



Holiday snap: Mr Mulligan, the Gold Cup winner, yesterday begins a break from the track after his arduous Cheltenham success

Photograph: Julian Herber/Allsport

## HYPERION'S TIPS

He in good form - though Domapell is closely handicapped with this one. Perhaps this event can go to JACKSON FLINT, who has regained his old sparkle. This nine-year-old likes far ground, looks well weighted and has the assistance of Richard Dwyer.

1.15: Grouseman is capable of winning this off top weight but is inconsistent. Thursday Night has plenty of ability too, but looks a difficult ride. Lord Gylfene improved to good level at Newbury last time and looks from a shrewd start

mark 8lb higher than his latest win, however. The one to take advantage in this marathon could well be McGREGOR THE THIRD. Gordon Richards' 11-year-old runs off the same mark as when caught only on the line by General Wolfe at Haydock three weeks ago.

## RESULTS

**FAKENHAM**  
2.10: 1. ANTELOPE FLYER (Mr B. Jones) 7-2, 2. General (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 3. Apollo (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 4. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 5. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 6. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 7. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 8. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 9. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 10. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10.

2.40: 1. WHAT CHANCE (Mr A. Jones) 7-2, 2. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 3. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 4. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 5. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 6. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 7. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 8. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 9. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 10. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10.

2.50: 1. PATS MINISTRE (Mr A. Jones) 7-2, 2. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 3. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 4. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 5. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 6. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 7. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 8. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 9. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 10. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10.

3.00: 1. BARONET (Mr A. Jones) 7-2, 2. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 3. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 4. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 5. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 6. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 7. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 8. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 9. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 10. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10.

3.10: 1. BROADEN LADY (Mr A. Jones) 7-2, 2. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 3. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 4. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 5. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 6. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 7. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 8. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 9. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 10. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10.

3.20: 1. FLASH IN THE PAN (Mr A. Jones) 7-2, 2. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 3. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 4. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 5. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 6. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 7. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 8. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 9. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 10. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10.

3.30: 1. THE CARRON MAN (Mr A. Jones) 7-2, 2. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 3. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 4. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 5. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 6. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 7. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 8. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 9. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 10. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10.

3.40: 1. ROYAL SAGE (Mr A. Jones) 7-2, 2. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 3. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 4. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 5. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 6. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 7. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 8. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 9. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 10. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10.

3.50: 1. SUNDAY VENTURE (Mr A. Jones) 7-2, 2. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 3. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 4. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 5. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 6. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 7. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 8. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 9. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 10. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10.

4.00: 1. THE CARRON MAN (Mr A. Jones) 7-2, 2. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 3. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 4. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 5. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 6. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 7. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 8. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 9. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 10. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10.

**12.45 Golden Swift**  
1.15: Golden Swift (Mr A. Jones) 7-2, 2. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 3. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 4. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 5. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 6. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 7. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 8. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 9. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 10. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10.

**1.50 McGREGOR THE THIRD**  
1.15: McGREGOR THE THIRD (Mr A. Jones) 7-2, 2. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 3. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 4. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 5. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 6. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 7. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 8. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 9. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 10. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10.

**2.25 MR PICKPOCKET**  
1.15: MR PICKPOCKET (Mr A. Jones) 7-2, 2. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 3. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 4. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 5. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 6. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 7. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 8. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 9. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 10. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10.

**12.45 WATSON'S NOVICE HANDICAP CHASE FINAL**  
1.15: WATSON'S NOVICE HANDICAP CHASE FINAL (Mr A. Jones) 7-2, 2. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 3. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 4. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 5. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 6. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 7. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 8. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 9. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 10. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10.

**1.15 JOCKEYS ASSOCIATION FINAL HURDLE**  
1.15: JOCKEYS ASSOCIATION FINAL HURDLE (Mr A. Jones) 7-2, 2. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 3. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 4. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 5. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 6. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 7. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 8. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 9. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 10. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10.

**1.50 MARSTONS MIDLANDS GRAND NATIONAL HCAP CHASE**  
1.15: MARSTONS MIDLANDS GRAND NATIONAL HCAP CHASE (Mr A. Jones) 7-2, 2. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 3. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 4. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 5. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 6. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 7. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 8. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 9. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 10. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10.

**1.15 JOCKEYS ASSOCIATION FINAL HURDLE**  
1.15: JOCKEYS ASSOCIATION FINAL HURDLE (Mr A. Jones) 7-2, 2. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 3. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 4. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 5. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 6. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 7. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 8. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 9. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 10. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10.

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**HYPERION**  
1.15: Hyperion (Mr A. Jones) 7-2, 2. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 3. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 4. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 5. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 6. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 7. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 8. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 9. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 10. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10.

**3.00 CONTI D'ESTRUAL**  
1.15: CONTI D'ESTRUAL (Mr A. Jones) 7-2, 2. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 3. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 4. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 5. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 6. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 7. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 8. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 9. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 10. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10.

**4.05 SHIELDS**  
1.15: SHIELDS (Mr A. Jones) 7-2, 2. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 3. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 4. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 5. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 6. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 7. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 8. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 9. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 10. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10.

**12.45 WATSON'S NOVICE HANDICAP CHASE FINAL**  
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**1.50 MARSTONS MIDLANDS GRAND NATIONAL HCAP CHASE**  
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**2.25 BET WITH THE TOTE NOVICE HANDICAP CHASE FINAL**  
1.15: BET WITH THE TOTE NOVICE HANDICAP CHASE FINAL (Mr A. Jones) 7-2, 2. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 3. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 4. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 5. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 6. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 7. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 8. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 9. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10, 10. The (Mr B. Jones) 11-10.

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**2.25 BET WITH THE TOTE NOVICE HANDICAP CHASE FINAL**  
1.15: BET WITH THE TOTE NOVICE HANDICAP CHASE FINAL (Mr A. Jones) 7-2, 2. The



## sport



**FIVE NATIONS FOCUS:** Both are outside centres born in 1965, but when they face each other in Cardiff today, Will Carling will be ending his international career while Allan Bateman's is just beginning. **Chris Hewett** reports

# Same age, different futures, grand stage

Two outside centres, born nine months apart and no more than 100 miles apart in 1965, are now, at long last, direct adversaries after plotting deeply contrasting routes along the highways and byways of international rugby. When Will Carling and Allan Bateman stare into the whites of each other's eyes across the Arms Park half-way line this afternoon, they will be only too aware of just how different they are.

For Carling, who feels instinctively that now is the time to bring down the curtain on a phenomenal decade in the public eye, today's Five Nations finale between Wales and England is a denouement in more senses than one; for Bateman, it is a new beginning, the delayed flowering of a union career interrupted by a not entirely fruitful sojourn in rugby league.

For the barbed and Barboured Englishman, tired of the limelight's unforgiving glare, top-level sport has become a treadmill; for the low-slung and combative Welshman, it is a brave new world pregnant with possibilities. Wild horses could not drag Carling anywhere near the plane that will take the Lions to South Africa in a couple of months' time - indeed, if England's former captain heads south of the equator this summer, it will be in search of the sort of sun-soaked peace and quiet seldom associated with the Springbok citadels of Newlands or King's Park. The opposite is true of Bateman, who is looking increasingly like the centre of Fran Cotton's dreams.

Compare comments from the two men this week and gauge the gulf in desire and enthusiasm. "I need time to think," Carling said. "There will be no definite decision on my international future until the summer, but it takes up more and more time and I'm not sure whether it's what I want any longer."

"I'm not saying my feeling for England rugby has greatly diminished but you change as a person as the years go by. Next October, the national team will effectively be cooped up in a hotel for a whole month in preparation for the pre-Christmas Tests. I don't want to close the door right now but..." and he shrugged his shoulders in a way that suggested he would rather eat uncooked offal from a dodgy abattoir than spend an entire autumn liv-



"It will be emotional but I don't suppose many Welshmen will break down in tears"

ing on a diet of room service and squad training.

All of which is a foreign language to Bateman, every bit as reticent and withdrawn as his more illustrious peer but vibrantly alive to the challenges that lay before him. "A Lions trip would be the high point of my career and I'd love to get the chance now because the year 2000 seems an obvious time to call it a day. I've got another two years on my contract with Richmond and I'd like to extend it by another one, but there's no guarantee that I'll still be around when the Lions travel again."

"I'm hopeful, of course. Centre is a key position for the Lions because you can break a game from there and we'll need strength in depth. There

are a lot of good players around in the position, real match-winners, so selection would be an achievement. I enjoy competition, though. South Africa would be a tough place to go for anyone who didn't."

Had Bateman - born in Maesteg and a Welsh Youth player in 1984 when Carling was making his early strides as captain of England Schools - not uprooted to play rugby league for Warring-

"When Wales toured Australia last summer I heard that they were looking to talk with me about coming back but there was no contact. I flew over from Sydney to play league in the European Championship and about three weeks later, Richmond got in touch. It moved very quickly from there; the Barbarians picked me for their game against Australia - fantastic thrill, that, especially for someone who went north after winning just four caps, none of them against a major southern hemisphere nation - and when poor Gareth Thomas croaked himself before the Test with South Africa before Christmas, bingo I was back."

And how. According to Ben Clarke, the England and Lions' loose forward who captains Bateman at Richmond, there is no more cultured centre in British rugby. "I'm constantly surprised, taken

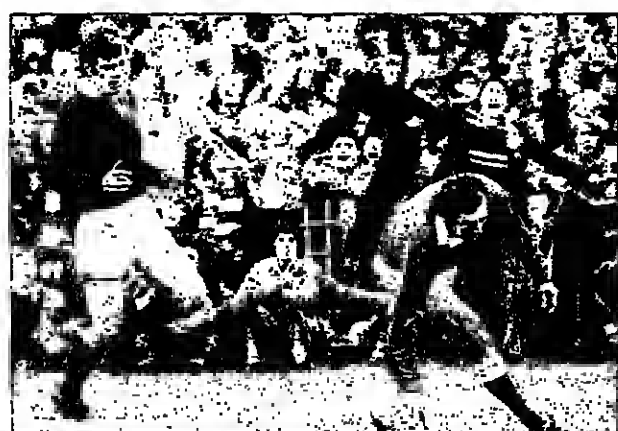
aback sometimes, by the intelligence of his contribution," he said during this week's build-up to the Arms Park. "He's a very quiet type, but when he does talk he makes an enormous amount of sense. Every time I train or play with him he offers some new refinement and if you ask me, there's an awful lot more to come. I honestly think he's capable of anything."

Even Carling waxes lyrical about the striking success of his contemporary's autumnal renaissance. "Very good player, Bateman," he says. "He seems to me to be a good basic footballer, an all-rounder who has balance, the ability to read a game and is capable of reacting to any given situation. In a sense, he is more crucial than any other individual to what is a very dangerous Welsh back division."

It may well be, then, that Carling's last hurrah in what remains the most emotion-clogged Five Nations fixture of their all-well, coincided with a definitive statement of future intent from a rival who, in different circumstances, he might have confronted a dozen times in the last 10 years.

"Emotion? Oh, it will be emotional," he agrees. "Mind you, I don't suppose for a moment that too many Welshmen will break down in tears because it's my last game." And a smile flickers at the edges of those famously dark eyes, as though the very thought of thousands of weeping Arms Park supporters is enough to make life in the gold-fish bowl worth living after all.

## Arms Park preservation lobby gathering support



Gareth Edwards touches down for Wales against Scotland at Cardiff Arms Park in 1976. Photograph: Colorsport

According to a certain Italian poet of 14th century vintage, the deepest and most remote circles of hell contained all manner of giants, sorcerers and sowers of discord. Dante knew a thing or two, obviously. For generations of English rugby players, Cardiff Arms Park was the bottom circle of hell, inhabited by nightmarish phantoms who answered to names like Gareth, Phil and Barry.

It is safe to assume that few of the tears shed on the terraces of the National Stadium when it hosts its last big Five Nations occasion this afternoon will be English. Some of the greatest red rose captains of the post-war era would not only have voted to raze the damned place to the ground,

but would have volunteered to drive the bulldozers as well. If they turn up in central Cardiff in a couple of months' time and speak nicely to the demolition contractors, they might yet exact sweet revenge on Fortress Taff. In May, sacrilegious workmen are scheduled to flatten the existing structure, re-lay the holy turf at a different angle and construct a 73,000-seater stadium, complete with retractable roof, in good time for the 1999 World Cup. It should be a snip at £14m.

Jay Parrish, a director of the architects, Lobb Partnership, describes the Arms Park facilities as obsolete in comparison with the creature comforts to be found at Twickenham or Murrayfield and

the Welsh Rugby Union, aware that a World Cup final would overstretch an old ground with a capacity of no more than 50,000, are in full agreement. The only way forward, says the Cardiff wheelers and dealers, is to build anew with help from the Millennium Commission.

Not surprisingly, the romanticism of Welsh rugby - and they are legion - are horrified at the thought of losing the Vallhalla where JJ and IPR ruled in the wide open spaces and the Viet Gwent - the Pontypool front row - squeezed opponents until they squeaked. Dai Watkins, Clive Rowlands, Brian Price and Cliff Morgan have all sounded off this week and now the Welsh Rugby Union is up and running a late legal challenge to the coming renege cannot be ruled out.

Even high-profile supporters of the scheme are concerned that too little information has reached the public domain. Gareth Edwards, the scrum-half who bestrode the Arms Park throughout the 1970s, bemoans the "cloak and dagger" behaviour of the movers and shakers behind the project while giving his blessing to the wider principles behind the redevelopment.

Time is up for the National Stadium as we know it. Or is it? Chris Hewett reports

When I was embarking on my international career 30 years ago, one wanted all his supporters to be there. But the main work planned for the new stadium is to be a 73,000-seater stadium. It is the largest of its kind in the world. It is the largest of its kind in the world. It is the largest of its kind in the world.

Cardiff City Council's chief executive, Bryn Parry, said the new stadium would have done much to improve the city's image and to provide a better environment for the 1999 World Cup.

It makes no sense, he said, to build a new stadium when the existing one could be improved. He said the council should consider other options.

Cardiff City Council's chief executive, Bryn Parry, said the new stadium would have done much to improve the city's image and to provide a better environment for the 1999 World Cup.

## Scots bar Benazzi's path to Grand Slam history Students' win gives Welsh morale a lift

SIMON TURNBULL reports from Paris

Never before has a French Grand Slam coronation taken place on home soil. History beckons, and Parisian pomp and circumstance awaits the 14 Frenchmen who have the honour, and the burden, of carrying the Tricolore into the Parc des Princes' final Five Nations battle this afternoon.

It is one of the ironies which surround the unexpected denouement to this season's championship that the man who will lead the French XV on their historic mission once played against them. Not that Christian Carrere, the JP's Bastiat and Rives, or Daniel Dubroca - captains of the four French sides to have clinched Grand Slams on foreign shores - would begrudge Abdelatif Benazzi the unique place he stands to occupy in the Pantheon of Gallic, or in his case adopted Gallic, greats.

The French rugby fraternity was too busy making sure it was not counting its metaphorical cockles yesterday to dwell on

the fact that the skipper of Les Bleus happened to be born in Morocco and baptised at the international altar for the land of his Arabic fathers. Despite the flair which frizzled *les rosbifs* at Twickenham a fortnight ago, there was a marked French reluctance to assume that *les huggis* will be easy meat.

Jean-Claude Skrela captured the mood of caution, the Grand Slam back row boy of 1977 and coach to the class of '97 insisting: "We have won nothing yet. It would be an error to think we have a Grand Slam in our pocket. The Scots will come to the Parc with the same team spirit as we will have, and they come here with nothing to lose."

"Beating England was only a semi-final victory for us. We still have to play the final. We still have to win it." And winning is something France have not achieved in their last two Five Nations fixtures against Scotland.

The fact that just four members of the team beaten at Murrayfield last year will line up today is a fair measure of the depth of France's casualty list

this season and the depth of the talent Skrela and his assistant, Pierre Villepreux, have unearthed.

Not only that, Villepreux, one of the finest free-spirit full-backs of his day, has sharpened a near novice back-line close to cutting-edge perfection. "To be in this position... c'est formidable."

He said yesterday, "We did not expect it." It is just as well for Scotland that in Alan Tait they have a midfield defensive marshal in whom the sight of the razor-sharp Christophe Lamaison will strike no fear. "I've played against the Mal Meningas of this world," Tait observed, reflecting on his experience as a

rugby league World Cup finalist. "They were frightening guys, but once you get on the field that fear goes."

The presence of sports psychologist Richard Cox among the entourage at Scotland's Versailles training session yesterday suggests the fear factor may be marginalised in the last championship match to be played in the cauldron of Parc des Princes; an autumn Test against the Springboks will be France's final engagement there before the move to the new Stade de France next year.

A Grand Slam would be a perfect parting gift. France's most recent dates back a decade, to the 1987 team against whom Tait made his debut in the drawn World Cup match in Christchurch that summer. "I'll never forget the try Serge Blanco scored from a tapped penalty," the Newcastle centre mused yesterday. "He was under the sticks before we even realised he had run the ball."

The veteran behind the Scottish pack would be ideally placed to compare the Gallic

Grand Slammers of 1987 and 1997, though if Scotland manage to reproduce the dynamism which steamrollered the admittedly sorry Irish two weeks ago, the expected coronation party may yet be in for an almighty pooping.

The Scots have famously tripped France at the final hurdle before, claiming the grand prize for themselves courtesy of Jim Calder's try and the booming boot of Peter Dods at Murrayfield in 1984. Killed souls seeking omens in Paris this morning may be further encouraged by discovering recollections of an even more painful last-ditch French disappointment within the pages of *Midi Olympique*, France's rugby weekly: when the team led by the remarkable flanker-cum-drop-kicker Jean Prat were thwarted by Wales at Stade Colombes in 1955.

Today Benazzi and his boys become only the second French XV to challenge for a "Grand Chelem" on the Calais side of the Channel. Crowning glory beckons in the park of the French princes.

Students' win gives Welsh morale a lift

Welsh Universities yesterday gave their countrymen a boost before today's Five Nations finale with a 28-17 victory over their English counterparts.

Carl Morgan, Tristan Evans and Paul Jones scored tries for the Welsh in a match watched by the England coach, Jack Rowell, and the Welsh Rugby Union chairman, Vernon Pugh.

While Rowell was hoping to spot some promising players for the future, some of today's most powerful performers who have given England a hard time in the World Cup were in action in the Super 12 tournament. Two late tries by the substitute flanker, Daniel Manu, helped New South Wales to their first victory in this year's competition as they beat Canterbury 25-8.

The home side struggled in the first half to break down New Zealanders' stubborn defence and led by only 9-8 at the break thanks to three Matt Burke penalties. The Wallaby full-back kicked two more penalties to make it 15-8 and when Manu

came on as a 58th-minute replacement for the Test forward Michael Briall, the Australians began to take a grip. But they had to wait until five minutes from time to cross the Canterbury line.

A superb break from David Campese - recalled after NSW's 33-26 defeat by Waikato in its opening game - stretched the visitors' defence and a clever pass put Manu in for the touchdown. Manu's second try came in injury time. After a fierce forward drive from a penalty, the Tongan-born flanker barged over the Canterbury line.

England's captain, Pip Spivey, is returning to her birthplace to lead out her team in the Hong Kong Women's Rugby Sevens today. Spivey, 32, spent the first three years of her life there and was desperate to return before the island's return to China.

Spivey was born in Hong Kong, but her family moved to England when she was three. She played for the England women's team and was a member of the England women's rugby team.



# Hughes walking a tightrope

Dave Hadfield talks to the former St Helens coach who now has the job of reviving Wigan in the second season of Super League starting this weekend.

Looking at the world through Eric Hughes' eyes on the eve of the new Super League season, it could be difficult to decide whether he has the best job in the game or the worst.

Hughes is the man charged with holding together the stronghold that was Wigan; an edifice undermined by drama and tension off the pitch and dwindling resources on it.

"I know what people are thinking," he says. "Eric Hughes has come to the club just as it's about to collapse under him. I still see it as a great opportunity, and you don't turn down opportunities like this."

They say something else about Hughes. They say that he was the coach discarded by St Helens just as they approached take-off velocity and that his appointment at Central Park shows that the balance of power in the oldest rivalry in the game has shifted fundamentally. Wigan are now taking Saints' rejects.

"People are discarded all the time... You've got to have faith in your ability to do the job."

Although it was only after the appointment of the Australian, Shaun McKee, as his successor that Saints began to win trophies, Hughes is entitled to claim his share of the credit.

"I think I did a pretty good job at St Helens. I knew I had problems when I took over an ageing team with no money in the bank to change it without a lot of wheeling and dealing."

"When I left, they had a young team that was just about to take off. I'm proud of what I did at St Helens."

What he was originally brought in to do at Wigan was the job at which he has few equals: identifying and nurturing young talent.

Few would have doubted his ability to make a success of that. But, as he would admit, taking full responsibility a few months later for the whole shooting match is a different matter entirely. He had no hesitation in accepting the invitation to take over from Graeme West, but neither he nor anyone else expects it to be easy for him to put the sense of purpose back into Wigan.

The way in which he started the task was revealing. One by one, the players were called in for a face to face session with their new coach.

"They were invited to talk about how they thought the playing side of the club should be run and how they saw their role in that scheme of things."

"Talking to them in a group can mean that the quieter ones don't get a say, so I learned a lot more this way," Hughes



Eric Hughes, the new Wigan coach, believes that the glory days can soon return to Central Park

Photograph: Peter Jay

said. "They won't get it all their own way, but they will be listened to."

One conclusion he soon reached was that the players needed a more structured working week.

"We discussed what a fair working week would be and I've organised it so that they have a few afternoons off and at least one full day. Everyone needs that."

The trade-off for that is that when they are at work, they are at work. Wigan players are not

quite clocking on and off, but there is a new emphasis on discipline and a more visible work ethic.

That is very much in tune with Eric Hughes' whole career. A lean, fit, skilful centre with a distinct mean streak - "I prefer the term committed," he says - he won the full range of honours with Widnes and played eight Tests for Great Britain. Unlike some equally talented players of his era, he was always a grinder and will expect no less of his new charges.

"It's not that he's brought in a lot that's new," says one of the most gifted, Henry Paul. "We are all experienced players and we know all the moves."

What he has brought is a new emphasis on doing the basics properly. The other thing is defence. We were always known as a mean team defensively; we've lost a bit of that and we need to get back to it."

These are limited objectives, but the word from around Central Park is that Hughes has made a good start towards

them. That is just as well, because the time he has available is limited as well.

As Hughes points out, Wigan can guarantee themselves another bad season very quickly. Losing two games was enough to deny them the Super League title first time, so a good start is essential.

They must make that start without Val Tuiamala, sold to Newcastle as part of the integration of the playing strength, Kevin Skerrett, who will be on the bench for Wigan's

first opponents, Halifax, and Shaun Edwards, who is likely to be the next to leave.

"We do need to rebuild in some areas," Hughes admits. He is in contact with specific players to strengthen positions with which he is not satisfied, but has had the novel problem this week of his chairman being in court and thus rather preoccupied with other matters.

There is, in theory, about 29m in Wigan's coffers from the sale of Central Park to Tesco, but will Hughes be

allowed more autonomy in the transfer market than his predecessor?

If he is worried about these matters, Wigan's new coach is not showing it. He is positively philosophical about the prospect of Edwards' departure and still looks around him at training and sees an enviable array of talent.

"We are a lot better off than Saints were when I arrived there," he says. "I still see this as the best job in rugby league."

## Harsh welcome awaits Skerrett

DAVE HADFIELD

If and when Kelvin Skerrett steps up from the substitutes' bench in the first match of Halifax's Super League season at Wigan tomorrow, he will be assured of a warm welcome from his former team-mates.

The former Great Britain prop, released by Wigan at the end of last season, has signed a one-year deal at Halifax and is in their squad for the game at Central Park.

There will be no sentiment attached to his return, however. "I've lost a lot of mates from this club," said Henry Paul, whose fellow-countryman, Val Tuiamala, has also departed. "But you always try harder against former team-mates."

"No one was worse than

Kelvin at dishing it out to ex-Wigan players. So this time, Kelvin, you'll be getting some back."

Skerrett is kept on the bench at the start of the game by Harrison and Wayne Jackson, but he is sure to figure later in the match.

Halifax's caretaker coaches, David Hobbs and Tony Anderson, have John Schuster back in action, but Wigan's Eric Hughes has a series of doubts.

Jason Robinson will be given until today to recover from an ankle injury. That remains unlikely and there must be a serious risk attached if Gary Connolly plays his first match since damaging his knee during his stint with Harlequins.

Shaun Edwards has not been considered because of his absence on father-to-be duties

and Craig Murdoch will be at scrum-half, with Hughes assuring him that there is still a place at the club for him even if he succeeds in signing Castleford's Tony Smith.

Salford, who play Castleford in their first Super League match following last year's promotion, will be without two of their experienced, recent recruits, Andy Platt and David Hulme. Two young forwards, Paul Southern and Craig Randall, come into the side.

The champions, St Helens, whose on-off pursuit of Warrington's Jesty Harris stepped up a notch yesterday, go to London Broncos without Derek McVey, who is hoping to recover from a cracked bone in his wrist in time for next Saturday's Challenge Cup semi-final against Salford.

Chris Morley deputises, while Lee Briars continues to stand in at scrum-half for the suspended Bobbie Goulding.

The Broncos have Martin Offiah back in harness, but have a worry over their Great Britain tourist, Tuisen Tollett, who has a shoulder injury.

Leeds will have their influential hooker, Wayne Collins, back against Oldham, who hope to be unchanged if their centre, Vince Fawcett, has recovered from mumps.

Work permit problems have delayed the arrival of the new Wigan signing Paul Koko, the 24-year-old Tongan centre, Koko, who starred for his country in the World Nines in Australia, is earmarked as a replacement for Tuiamala, now back in rugby union with Newcastle.

### WEEKEND SUPER LEAGUE TEAM NEWS

#### Leeds v Oldham

Coach Dean Bell has delayed the selection of his new-look Leeds side but the former South Queensland hooker Wayne Collins will return after missing last Sunday's Challenge Cup win over Featherstone.

Oldham have a major doubt over the former Leeds three-quarter Vince Fawcett, who is suspected of having mumps, and Al Lewis, who broke a leg against Leeds last April, is on stand-by.

Big things are expected of the Rhinos after a disastrous first campaign in Super League and they should make amends for conceding a rare double to the Bears.

Last season: Leeds 16 Oldham 25; Oldham 25 Leeds 26.

Last five League matches: Leeds W-L-W-L-W.

Top scorers (1996): Tries: Holroyd (Leeds 13); Atkinson (Oldham 11); Goals: Holroyd (Leeds 90); Maloney (Oldham 45).

Match odds: H 5-6, O 16-1, A 5-6 (Oldham receive 16 points start on the coupon).

Referee: J Connolly (Wigan).

#### London v St Helens

The Broncos include Martin Offiah, who plays outside Greg Barwick on the left wing while full-back Tony Martin has recovered from a groin injury and is picked up in the Challenge Cup debut by Bradford.

Saints begin the defence of their title without scrum-half Bobbie Goulding, who is half-way through a six-month suspension, and injured forward Derek McVey as coach Shaun McKee sticks with the side that reached the last four of the Challenge Cup.

The Broncos, despite running the champions desperately close in both matches last season, are seeking a first against the Saints, who have won all previous 10 fixtures between the two clubs.

Last season: London 28 St Helens 32; St Helens 24 London 22.

Last five League matches: London W-W-W-L-W.

Top scorers (1996): Tries: Barwick (London) 16; Newlove (St Helens 38); Goals: Barwick (London 55); Boulton (St Helens 162).

Match odds: H 5-6, O 14-1, A 5-6 (London receive 10 points start).

Referee: R Smith (Castleford).

#### Salford v Castleford

Salford, promoted as last season's First Division champions, must put away the Eagles to have a chance to gain their revenge on home soil at the Don Valley Stadium. New coach Phil Lander has no injury worries but has yet to close the £20,000 deal that will bring the former Great Britain hooker Steve McCrum from Widnes.

Pars, still looking for their first win on British soil, are without injured second rower Troy Bellamy but have prop Adam Peters free from suspension and included in an all-Australian line-up.

Last season: Sheffield 52 Salford 18; Salford 24 Castleford 24.

Last five League matches: Sheffield W-L-W-L-W.

line-up in last month's 36-13 home Cup defeat by Salford.

Danny Orr, 15, is set for his first team debut at scrum-half in place of the transfer-listed Tony Smith.

Last season: No corresponding fixture.

Last five League matches: Salford W-W-W-L-W.

Top scorers: Tries: McVey (Salford) 20; Flowers, C Smith, T Smith (Castleford) 10 each; Goals: Bellamy (Salford) 106; Bonga (Castleford 81).

Match odds: H 5-6, O 16-1, A 5-6 (Castleford receive 14 points start).

Referee: S Cummings (Widnes).

#### Sheffield v Paris

After being caught cold in Paris' sensational launch of Super League a year ago, the Eagles have the chance to gain their revenge on home soil at the Don Valley Stadium. New coach Phil Lander has no injury worries but has yet to close the £20,000 deal that will bring the former Great Britain hooker Steve McCrum from Widnes.

Pars, still looking for their first win on British soil, are without injured second rower Troy Bellamy but have prop Adam Peters free from suspension and included in an all-Australian line-up.

Last season: Sheffield 52 Paris 18; Paris 24 Sheffield 24.

Last five League matches: Sheffield W-L-W-L-W.

Top scorers: Tries: Senior (Sheffield) 17; Bonga (Paris) 10; Goals: Aston (Sheffield) 88; Torrellis (Paris) 27.

Match odds: H 5-6, O 14-1, A 5-6 (Paris receive six points start).

Referee: R Connolly (Wigan).

#### Wigan v Halifax

New Wigan coach Eric Hughes picks Craig Murdoch at scrum-half for the unenviable Shaun Edwards but the Warriors are boosted by the return of Gary Connolly, who missed pre-season games with a knee injury sustained playing rugby union.

Caretaker Halifax coach David Hobbs is able to recall former Great Britain forward Michael Jackson, who has overcome a back injury, and veteran prop Iwan Skerrett is on the bench against his old club.

The Blue Sox have to go back to October 1987 for their last win at Central Park.

Last season: Wigan 34 Halifax 26; Halifax 4 Wigan 50.

Last five League matches: Wigan W-W-W-W-L.

Top scorers: Tries: Robinson (Wigan) 26; Bentley (Halifax) 22; Goals: Farrell (Wigan) 113; Schuster (Halifax) 113.

Match odds: H 5-6, O 16-1, A 5-6 (Halifax receive 20 points start).

Referee: S Preeley (Castleford).

Handicap betting supplied by William Hill.

## Eldredge facing up to quad dilemma

Ice skating

Todd Eldredge is facing a tough challenge as he prepares to defend his title at the World Figure Skating Championships, which begin tomorrow in Lausanne, Switzerland.

Eldredge, a four-times US champion, will try to keep his title without attempting to execute a quad, the four-revolution

jump that nearly all his rivals have completed in competition.

Canada's Elvis Stojko and Russians Alexei Urmanov and Ilia Kulik landed quads earlier this month at the Champions' Series final, and are sure to try again, most likely in combination jumps.

Stojko landed the first clean quad-triple combination in competition and won in Canada. He plans to repeat the feat

in Lausanne, adding a second triple axel to his long programme and a triple-triple combination to his short.

Eldredge has been practising the quad as a safeguard, but gives every indication he will not try it under the pressure of competition. After hurting his right ankle on a triple axel in practice last week, he is less likely to take chances that might cost him the title.

## BAF has competition for control of TV

Athletics

MIKE ROWBOTTOM

A sport set in turmoil over recent months by political in-fighting, faces a crucial trial at the annual meeting of the British Athletic Federation in Birmingham today.

A bid by the South of England Athletic Association to loosen the governing body's grip on television and sponsorship deals threatens to fragment the sport. If the SEAA wins the vote of club members in the meeting, and the decision is subsequently endorsed by the British Athletic Federation's Council, it

could undermine athletics' case for receiving Lottery money.

A BAF application for annual funding of £5.5m within the recently established World Class Performance scheme is being considered by the Sports Council, which has made it known that it wants to be assured the sport is marching in step before turning over large amounts of public money.

Since the BAF's executive chairman, Professor Peter Radford, announced his resignation in January, the UK Sports Council has been consulting with BAF officers over restructuring the domestic sport's management.

"We feel very strongly that the BAF needs to take a good, hard look at its structure," a Sports Council spokesman said yesterday. "Any break-up in an uncoordinated, haphazard way which leaves different bodies doing different things, we don't think would be particularly helpful."

"That isn't an endorsement on the other hand, of what the BAF is currently doing. The fact that one element of the sport wants to break away shows the sport as a whole has got a major problem and needs to sort it out."

The SEAA, which has spent the week canvassing for support from the 600-plus clubs in its

area, is recommending that individual associations should be able to conduct their own television and sponsorship arrangements for their own meetings.

The action has been prompted by the removal of the British grand prix meeting in Sheffield from its traditional venue of Crystal Palace, where it has regularly generated funds which the SEAA has passed to local clubs.

The second factor is the adversarial reaction within the sport's traditional elements to the way Channel 4 is covering athletics within its new four-year contract. If the proposal is carried, the

South would be able to set up a one-day meeting to help fill a prospective shortfall of £70,000.

It may also lead to the Amateur Athletic Association of England withdrawing its 117-year-old event from BAF control - which wants to combine it with the World Championships trials - and staging it on different dates.

There has been speculation that in such circumstances, the AAA would turn to the disgraced former British promotions officer, Andy Norman, to help assemble athletes, although such an appointment would cause disquiet in athletics - and political - circles.

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## England Under-18s humble Wales

Hockey

BILL COLWILL

Peter Wiles, with two goals in the opening seven minutes, sent the England Under-18 team on their way to a crushing 11-1 win against Wales on the opening day of the Home Quad Youth tournament at the National Stadium, Milton Keynes, yesterday.

There were also two goals each from Andrew Langlands, Andrew Todd and Paul Wickham.

It might have been different but for two brilliant saves by England's goalkeeper Pat Aldridge from Wales' James Bainbridge before England had opened their account. Bainbridge scored

Wales consolation goal but then England were into double figures. Earlier, Simon Lanyon scored twice for the Under 16s in their 6-0 win over Wales.

England's Seniors begin the Golden Jubilee Tournament in Karachi today against Pakistan with the news that their captain, Russell Garcia, their most experienced player, is sick and could be missing.

All Premier games were postponed because of the Pakistan tournament with the exception of Old Loughborough's arranged match against Surbiton, who will be looking to move out of the relegation zone with a win against the Old Boys.

The remainder of the week-

end's National League matches centre on the Division One relegation battles. With Crossy and Trojans likely to fill the two automatic relegation places, there is a desperate fight to avoid the next two play-off places.

Oxford University and Hull, currently filling those places, both have home fixtures. Oxford, who will need to lift themselves after their midweek Varsity match defeat, entertain Edgworth, just three points above them while Hull meet Trojans.

Bromley and City of Portsmouth, currently one point above the University, have difficult away games at the champions, Beeston, and fourth-placed Isca.

## Kellogg shows promise

Badminton

Donna Kellogg

Donna Kellogg proved herself to be the brightest new prospect in the country when she reached a semi-final in her first All-England Championships at the age of 19.

The Derbyshire teenager and her partner, Chris Hunt, a Commonwealth Games gold medalist in mixed doubles, next face the Chinese pair of Liu Yong and Ge Fei, having already beaten two seeded pairs.

On Thursday they came from 8-12 down in the second game to win 15-8 17-16 against the fifth-seeded Russians, Nikolai Zuev and Marina Yakusheva.

with Kellogg recovering from a shaky patch during the second game to score heavily at the net.

Denmark's Poul-Erik Hoyer, the top-seeded men's title holder and Olympic gold medalist who lives in Milton Keynes, is only two matches away from becoming the first player in a quarter of a century to win three All-England men's singles in a row. Hoyer's 15-7, 15-12 victory over Indonesia's Budi Santoso set up a re-match with China's Dong Jiong, a player he beat in the final in Atlanta.

The other semi-final is between China's former world junior champion, Sun Jun, and the world champion, Hervanto Arbi.



## sport

Manchester City's fifth manager of the season has brought stability and the possibility of a play-off place. Glenn Moore talked to him about punctuality, his love of music and his disdain for 'Charlie Big Potatoes'.

# Clark tuned in to City's revival mood

If you frequent the Rhythmic Club, in Islington, you may remember him. Hangdog face, drooping moustache, sitting on his own in the corner. Yep, that was Frank Clark, manager of Manchester City.

Let anyone get the wrong idea. Clark was not scouting for talent. He was watching a maestro: Bo Diddley. Some managers play golf or tend the garden, some drink. Attending concerts, on his tod, is Clark's release from the pressures of the job.

"I get to all the best places - the Rhythmic's very salubrious," he said with a touch of irony. "I love it. I go on my own and sit in a corner out of the way. The manager recognised me that night, so did the rock critic of the Evening Standard - he even mentioned me in his critique of the show. My wife was well pleased, she said you were there then, because she wasn't too sure."

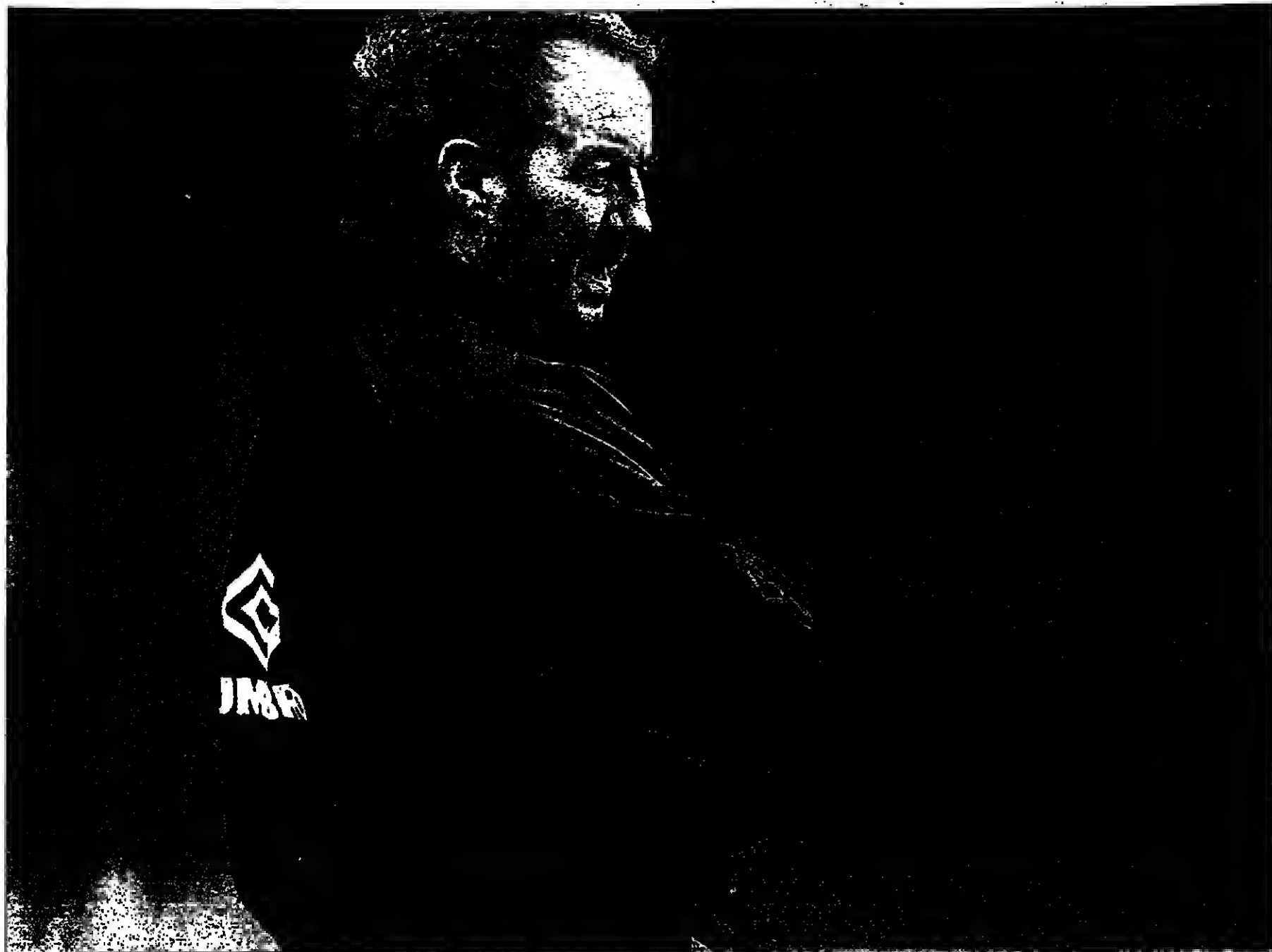
Frank Clark is an untypical manager. He does not leap up and down on the touchline, he rarely curses referees and avoids media publicity. He does not appear comfortable

'I like star players, special players, but I don't like that star attitude and I don't see any of that from Kinkladze'

in any of the accepted uniforms, the track-suit, sheepskin or Armani. But while he may look and behave more like the laboratory technician he once was, he is one of the most respected managers in the game. The feeling in Manchester is that, more by accident than design, City have finally appointed someone who really could restore the glory days.

Clark, 53, took over in late December a few weeks after leaving Nottingham Forest, worn down by the takeover battle and poor results. In the 11 games before he arrived City had won twice; in the next nine League games they won five and drew four, raising expectations of a play-off place. Even Alex Ferguson, the United manager, put a bet on City. Wednesday's defeat at Birmingham has quietened the mood but a victory today, at Grimsby, will spark the dreams again. "People change from game to game," Clark said. "If we win we're back on track, if we don't we're out of it. It is not like that. Promotion was never more than a possibility, and it is still a possibility. I didn't for a minute think we'd win every game."

We are talking at City's Platt Lane training ground, just under a mile from Maine Road. At first sight this partnership between the local



Frank Clark, who supervised training at Platt Lane yesterday, is trying the novel approach of applying common sense at Manchester City

Photograph: Peter Jay

council and club appears to be the community link every club should have. However, sharing the playing and social facilities with the public does have its problems. City, like Sunday morning park players, have to contend with stray balls flying across the pitch as they practice. They also have fans passing judgement on the touchline (as well, perhaps, as other clubs' spies).

"It is too accessible for a professional football club," Clark said. "It must have been very difficult for the players when they were having a bad time. At the moment, people want to come and say 'well done' but it is not always like that."

"You don't want to be in an ivory tower, separated from the supporters, but there has to be a line

somewhere where the players can work in privacy. Even Newcastle closed their training ground when they had problems."

This accessibility is one reason why the manager's office door has a security-coded lock on it, rather than the revolving door City's turnover of managers would suggest. The office, noted Clark, "is austere" but that is partly because it is almost new - being just a couple of years old it has only had five or six occupants so far.

"The club needed stability," City's fifth manager of the season said. "Players had been underperforming. I looked at the teams and we were putting out sides with eight internationals. People at any organisation don't perform to their

best when there is instability. They like security. I found that at Forest, not so much with players, but with staff. The longer the takeover went on, the more you could see the insecurity spreading."

In the circumstances Clark's first act at City, a code of conduct, was probably welcomed by his players as an sign of order replacing chaos. "I'm not into sipping people down and giving them long lectures. It was a case of laying down a few rules and standards. They are not oppressive, just basics like turning up on time."

It might seem a little thing, but I hate going into a dressing-room to start training and finding half of them are not ready. When I say we start at 10.30, I mean 10.30.

"The fines are only tenners. It

means nothing financially but it is the principle. It is about discipline and laughter, you can have one without the other but you won't have a good football club if you do."

"One or two players have stepped out of line in small ways and been dealt with. They all get treated the same. Shortly after I arrived I read a piece by someone who had spoken to Georgi Kinkladze. He had said I was the 'hardest' manager he had ever played for and he thought it was right that he did not get any special treatment." Clark looks half-puzzled, half-pleased. "I don't think I'm particularly hard."

This brings us on to the Georgian playmaker. Kinkladze, who had been injured during City's good run. Is he staying?

"People have a fixation about him. The first question in the press conference is nearly always: 'When is he going to be fit?' In that respect it was nice that the players showed they can win without him. There was no sense in the dressing-room of 'let's show we can win without Georgi' but it won't do them any harm."

"I don't know him well yet but he seems very well balanced. There is no 'Charlie Big Potatoes' about him. I like star players, special players, but I don't like that star attitude and I don't see any of that from him."

"We will try desperately hard to keep him - there is no sense of cashing in on him. We would like to think we can build a team which will allow him to show his special talents

for the benefit of the team. If he wants to leave, it is down to him. The club have made promises to him and we would keep them."

There is no "Charlie Big Potatoes" about Clark, either. Along with an ability to delegate, he cites a lack of ego as one of his strengths (and not in the way of someone saying his only fault is modesty). One of the memories of last season is watching Clark after Forest had beaten Lyons in the Uefa Cup in France. Through-out a pitchside interview, Forest fans had been calling his name. When it finished, he slowly walked towards them and, with great reluctance, raised an arm.

"It is important to acknowledge supporters but I find the populist thing difficult. I'm happy to take the responsibility but also want to share the praise. I had all my ego trips as a player. Egos get in the way, they cause more problems than anything in football."

A year ago this week Clark was preparing Forest for their Uefa Cup quarter-final home leg with Bayern Munich. Now he is preparing City to meet Grimsby Town. It

'I find the populist thing difficult. I had all my ego trips as a player. Egos get in the way. They cause problems'

has, he agreed with a wry smile, been an odd year.

When dealing with such contrasts, a lack of ego and sense of perspective are vital. Clark's long experience, as a non-League player with Crook Town, a European Cup winner with Forest, and a decade holding Orient together, are now invaluable.

So, too, is family life. He is living in a hotel but will move properly to Manchester when his younger daughter finishes her A levels in May. "Moving is an occupational hazard. I've been relatively lucky but I'll never forget the first few days taking my eldest daughter to a new primary school in London. I felt the bed on two legs. She was crying non-stop - she was about eight - and it was the first time we had moved since she was a baby."

These days Clark's daughters are more likely to be asking him for concert tickets. Referring to Britain's biggest band, and City's most famous fans, Clark said: "I guess I'll have to watch Oasis now, my daughters are into them but they are a bit too modern for me. Anything after 1961 is a bit modern for me."

In music, maybe, but fortunately for City fans his teams play thoroughly modern football.

## No 209 Southend United

### FAN'S EYE VIEW

by S E Heath

Is there such a thing as "relegation kit"? Can something as increasingly ephemeral as these coloured viscose concoctions be so fundamental to a team's success or failure in the league? The effects of "invisible" grey kits on performance are well documented, as is the irrational dependence that most association footballers seem to have on superstition and the fates.

Watching Southend versus Ipswich Town recently I was perturbed that two players seemed reluctant to reappear after the interval, only arriving just as the referee raised the whistle to his lips. It transpired that one of the miscreants, Andy Rammell, had been wrestling with his contact lenses and the other, Phil Girdle, refused to leave the dressing-room before him because it was his custom to always be the last on to the pitch. In view of the team's results so far one can only speculate with dread just how bad things could have been had he not kept up this tradition. It has even been mooted in crueler circles that if he took his superstition to its logical conclusion and did not come out at all then the team would only benefit further. However, could the team strip also be playing its malign part?

I must admit to having been only mildly curious as to the design of the much-heralded "new kit" before its first official airing in a pre-season friendly against Tottenham Hotspur. Admittedly, I was fairly cynical about the whole affair in that this would be about the 10th new kit in as many years but I had been lulled into a false sense of security over the past few seasons. The Southend team had of late been decked out in what was a largely understated and rather tasteless outfit as football strips go. I had begun to believe

that a rational mind was at last in charge of kit selection. I was soon disabused. Both he, and his guide dog, were both obviously criminally insane.

When the team took the field that night there was an audible gasp from the crowd. It was out of admiration. My initial opinion was that the tension of the evening had somehow got to "our boys" and they had all been sick down their fronts as they ran out on to the field. Sadly this was erroneous.

The offending garments are an indeterminate blue colour with an eruption of puce/yellow on the front. The only explanations I could come up with was that the team had upset our beloved chairman and he was wreaking his revenge.

This bizarre "design" has even meant that Southend United could possibly have achieved a league first. On two occasions this season, against West Brom and Norwich, they have been obliged to play a home game in their red away kit. Foolishly the opposition had assumed that "The Blues" played in blue and so had arrived with a yellow strip. No one had thought to mention the sick stain.

Is it any wonder we can't sign anyone? If required to wear one of these shirts in public I would demand a police escort and a blanket over my head. The last time "The Strippers" looked like this they slid into the Fourth Division. Relegation kit indeed!

Consequently the team stagger inexorably towards the abyss and we long suffering idiots begin to reacquaint ourselves with the routes to Shrewsbury, Walsall and Chesterfield. It might be appropriate, however for the board to resolve that, if they give most of our players the bum's rush in June (as they ought) they allow them to take their kit with them. And serve them right!

## MAJOR WEEKEND FOOTBALL FIXTURES

TODAY		NATIONWIDE FOOTBALL LEAGUE		THIRD DIVISION	
3.11 (unless stated)		First Division		Alton v Queens Park	
FA Cup 1st Round		11 Crystal Palace v Norwich		Dover v Maidstone	
1 Aston Villa v West Ham		11 Grimsby v Manchester City		Eastleigh v Alton	
2 Blackburn v Wimbledon		12 Huddersfield v Portsmouth		Exeter v Torquay	
3 Burton v Derby		13 Ipswich v Bolton		Forest v Notts County	
4 Leicester v Middlesbrough		14 Oxford v Wolves		Inverness Caledonia v Ross County	
5 Manchester Utd v Sheffield Wed		15 Port Vale v Charlton		Leyton Orient v Rushmore	
6 Newcastle v Coventry		16 Reading v Bradford City		Luton v Luton	
7 Nottingham Forest v Liverpool		17 Sheffield Utd v Oxford Utd		Macclesfield v Nantwich	
8 Southampton v Arsenal		18 Southend v QPR		Mansfield v Mansfield	
9 Tottenham v Leeds		19 Swindon v Stoke		Mansfield v Mansfield	
10 Tottenham v Leeds		20 Telford v Barnley		Mansfield v Mansfield	
11 Tottenham v Leeds		21 Tottenham v Leeds		Mansfield v Mansfield	
12 Tottenham v Leeds		22 Tottenham v Leeds		Mansfield v Mansfield	
13 Tottenham v Leeds		23 Tottenham v Leeds		Mansfield v Mansfield	
14 Tottenham v Leeds		24 Tottenham v Leeds		Mansfield v Mansfield	
15 Tottenham v Leeds		25 Tottenham v Leeds		Mansfield v Mansfield	
16 Tottenham v Leeds		26 Tottenham v Leeds		Mansfield v Mansfield	
17 Tottenham v Leeds		27 Tottenham v Leeds		Mansfield v Mansfield	
18 Tottenham v Leeds		28 Tottenham v Leeds		Mansfield v Mansfield	
19 Tottenham v Leeds		29 Tottenham v Leeds		Mansfield v Mansfield	
20 Tottenham v Leeds		30 Tottenham v Leeds		Mansfield v Mansfield	

## TEAM SHEET

Aston Villa v West Ham		Newcastle v Coventry	
Last season: 1-1. Last five League matches: Aston Villa WWWWL, West Ham LWLWL.		Last season: 3-0. Last five League matches: Newcastle WWWWL, Coventry LWLWL.	
Villa are likely to be without Stuart Pearce, who is still struggling with an ankle injury. West Ham's striker Harrison has a two-match suspension, and Portugal's Porteiro could start in midfield in place of Bishop.		Newcastle striker Ferdinand is still ruled out with a hamstring injury. He was named in the 4-3-3 defeat at Liverpool on Monday. Coventry's Whelan is serving a one-match suspension to manage. Blackburn could switch Dublin back to the forward line from central defence.	
Blackburn v Wimbledon		Nottingham Forest v Liverpool	
Last season: 2-2. Last five League matches: Blackburn WDWLD, Wimbledon DWLDD.		Last season: 1-0. Last five League matches: Nottingham Forest WDWLD, Liverpool WDWLD.	
Pearce and Doris are in contention to line up for Blackburn - Pearce has made only two starts in the last 16 months, while the Greek winger Doris has missed the last two matches through injury. Wimbledon have a full squad to pick from, apart from Holdsworth (doubtful with a rib injury).		Forest are likely to give a home debut to Van Hoogdonk while their latest signing, Moore from Tranmere, will start on the bench. City Ground's boy Collymore also looks likely to fill a substitutes' role as manager Evans sides with the team that beat Newcastle on Monday.	
Everton v Derby County		Southampton v Arsenal	
Last season: 0-0. Last five League matches: Everton WDWLD, Derby LWLWL.		Last season: 0-0. Last five League matches: Southampton LWLWL, Arsenal LWLWL.	
Everton's Phelan, Parkinson and Thomson face fitness tests. Youngsters Ball, Allen and Dunne are in the home squad. Derby's top scorer Stuart Pearce is suspended. Van der Laan has a foot injury and captain Sturges a knee problem. Laursen and McGrath are both ready to return.		Senes are without defenders Van Gool (knee) and Ochoa (ankle injury). Evans named his home debut up front. With Sese and John Wicks (both named) on the injured list, Arsenal choose the uncapped Harper ahead of Barthelemy, recalled from a loan spell at Wolves, in goal.	
Leicester v Middlesbrough		Tottenham v Leeds	
Last season: 0-0. Last five League matches: Leicester LWLWL, Middlesbrough WDWLD.		Last season: 2-1. Last five League matches: Tottenham LWLWL, Leeds LWLWL.	
Leicester's American goalkeeper Keller is on World Cup duty so Pople returns to the team. Middlesbrough midfielder Stamp could return to the starting line-up if passed fit, because Mustoe starts a two-match ban and Emerson, like Stamp, has an ankle injury.		Leeds have forward strikers Howard and Nelson are suspended. Leeds have fitness worries over Sharpe and Wallace. Sharpe's back injury has improved, though, and he has a good chance of recovering in time. Wallace is back from a two-match ban.	
Man Utd v Sheff Wed		Tomorrow: Chelsea v Sunderland	
Last season: 2-2. Last five League matches: Manchester Utd WDWLD, Sheffield Wednesday DWLWL.		Last season: 0-0. Last five League matches: Chelsea WDWLD, Sunderland LWLWL.	
Giggs (thorax) is fit again for United, and Paterson (groin strain) is also ready to return. Reane is completing a two-match suspension and Johnson is doubtful with a back injury, but Scholes and Butt are both fit ahead of schedule. Wednesday have Binkley available after a two-match ban.		Di Matteo, rested in midweek, should return for Chelsea but Anderson is banned. Colson looks set to continue in goal. For Sunderland, Shaw is ready for his first start in three months after a knee injury. New signing Hesseberg, a Danish Under-21 international, is in the squad.	

## Bradford must do without Waddle

### NATIONWIDE LEAGUE

Chris Waddle had hoped to spend today enjoying a return to the Premiership with Nottingham Forest, writes Rupert Metcalf. Instead, Bradford City's newly appointed captain lies on his sick bed, unable to help the Valley Parade club's battle against relegation from the First Division at Reading. Bradford have stopped Forest signing Waddle, who wrongly thought his contract could be torn up if a Premier club came in for him, on a free transfer. The former England forward failed to turn up for City's journey to Berkshire yesterday. I spoke to Chris last night and this morning, and he said he's still being physically sick. Chris Kanana, the Yorkshire club's manager, said last night: "Bradford City is my main concern and I do have a good relationship with Chris and I would

not want to jeopardise that. I have to take Chris's word."

The Second Division's most keenly contested fixture will be Bristol's 62nd League derby - which takes place amid bitter memories of the crowd trouble at the last meeting between City and Rovers, at Ashton Gate in December. Since then, City have banned 20 supporters for life and are waiting to do the same to others, after they have been before the courts. "It was a shameful day and I thought seriously of resigning," City's chairman, Scott Davidson, recalled.

That game ended 1-1, and the return finds City travelling to-morrow to the Memorial Ground, the stadium Rovers share with Bristol Rugby Club. City have been threatened by the Football Association with the loss of two League points if their fans cause any more trouble. They will have just 650 supporters, dressed in under-pooler escort, in the all-ticket crowd.

## Hateley back at Ibrox

### SCOTTISH FOOTBALL

Several recent meetings between Celtic and Rangers have been labelled the "derby of the decade", but for Glasgow fans it might not be too great an exaggeration tomorrow, when the men from Ibrox head for Parkhead in search of crucial Premier Division points. Rangers, who are desperate to equal Celtic's cherished record of nine successive titles set under the late Jock Stein between 1966 and 1974, are five points ahead of their arch rivals. However, they have major injury problems, which has led to a return to Ibrox for the 35-year-old Mark Hateley. Rangers have paid Queen's Park Rangers around £300,000 to re-sign the centre-forward

they sold to the Loftus Road club for £1m 18 months ago. They need him because Gordon Durie has joined a sick and injured list which also includes Erik Bo Andersen, Peter van Vossen and Sebastian Rozental.

Tomorrow Hateley may join Ally McCoist, 34, in an experienced Rangers front-line. Andy Gorham has both knee and rib injuries so Andy Dibble may make his debut in goal, while their captain Richard Gough may return after missing three games with a calf strain. Celtic ended their nine-match, 22-month winless run in the Old Firm fixture with a 2-0 triumph at Ibrox 10 days ago. Paolo Di Canio is doubtful with a hamstring injury but Tom Boyd returns after suspension.



# It seems commercial demands, the root of the problem, will always outweigh concerns for the players' physical well-being

Pat Nevin



friction and of course the player is caught in the middle. I have a great deal of respect for Ferguson and the way he deals with the international dilemmas, which plague the domestic manager. He suffers from them more than most, but also manages to deal with them better than most. He has the experience, the wisdom and importantly, enough money to be able to cope with the inherent problems. Player burn-out at the end of a season has cost many a championship

and it is accentuated by international appearances. Ferguson will understand these physical demands, hence the size and quality of his squad and the frequency with which it is rotated. The idea is to be able to rest any player who is beginning to look jaded and also to give any injured player the opportunity to recover properly. Most clubs have to play with two or three players carrying injuries at any one time. Apart from slowing them down, it affects the style and obviously the standard of their play. To have real aspirations towards winning the championship, the Manchester United manager knows that carrying players for any reason cannot be tolerated these days. He has also been able to prioritise regarding which trophies he really wants to go for. Contrast the relaxed reaction of Ferguson when losing to Wimbledon in the FA Cup and Walter Smith's similar body language after losing in the Scottish Cup to Celtic with any other manager in the coun-

try going out at the same stage. They know that the championship and Europe are the real prizes these days for clubs with high aspirations, especially financial. Indeed Fergie's attitude towards the Coca-Cola Cup seems to border on contempt, more an opportunity to blood youngsters than a serious competition to be fought for at all costs. Like other managers Ferguson is quick to protect his protégés, especially the most precocious such as Ryan Giggs. He has nurtured this talent too lovingly for too long to allow it to be ruined by short term overuse. He has steadfastly taken the position of flak-catcher when Ryan has been withdrawn (NB not Ryan has withdrawn) from Welsh squads. The Scotsman is doubtless happy to accept the criticism that he doesn't care enough for the Welsh national cause, because he knows how much more difficult it would be for the flying winger to live with such allegations. Andy Roxburgh was so concerned

about the problem of clubs with holding players, that he often urged the Scotland squad to have clauses written into their new contracts which ensured they were to be released for international games. If truth be told, though, the final decision always rests with the player these days, albeit allowing for a certain amount of coercion from the club. Some players have such a strong national pride and feeling of duty and honour for their country, that the club is always considered second, without a moment's hesitation. Others are more pragmatic, all too aware who actually pays the wages at the end of the week. Most however simply acquiesce, and endeavour to give their all to everyone, every time, everywhere. This happens even if it does lead to the odd tired, under par performance, which has the "experts" bemoaning the poor quality of our game, its players and their technique. Olivia Blair is on maternity leave

## Foxes bring Boro back to reality

They may have reached one cup final and they may be 90 minutes away from another, but for Middlesbrough fans this season will surely be regarded as a shambles if they lose their place in the Premiership come May. The Coca-Cola Cup finalists and an FA Cup semi-finalists are an uncomfortable four points adrift at the bottom of the table, and a further two points behind the fourth-from-bottom side. The mathematics of salvation will seem much easier if the Teesside team can reclaim the three points they have been docked by the Football Association - but no one at the Riverside Stadium can afford to rely upon that particular shove towards the escape route. Today Middlesbrough go to Leicester City, their adversaries at Wembley in the Coca-Cola Cup final on 6 April. The folk from Filbert Street, unlike their visitors, can just about afford to drop a few points about now and then, but with their place to play for none of the Leicester side should be in the mood for relaxation. Bryan Robson, the Middlesbrough player-manager, has had his share of difficulties with his foreign imports this season. One of them, Emerson, is doubtful with an ankle injury to-

### Rupert Metcalf on the weekend programme in the Premiership

day but another, Fabrizio Ravanelli, seems happy at last. On more than one occasion, the silver-haired striker's outbursts in the Italian media about his apparent desire to ply his trade anywhere but Teesside have caused a rumpus at the Riverside. Now, though, Ravanelli is singing a different tune. In an interview to the Turin newspaper *La Stampa* which was topped by the headline "Ravanelli: I'll win two cups and stay", the former Juventus striker said: "I feel lighter now. I have a four-year contract with Middlesbrough, where I am really at home." Ravanelli added that he was hopeful that his team would qualify for Europe by winning a domestic trophy. "I have really missed the European Wednesdays but I could rediscover them, with Middlesbrough," he said. "This club has never won anything. If Ravanelli brings them a cup and also the title of top scorer, it will be as if I had won another European Cup."

Nottingham Forest, also in the relegation zone, are still trying to strengthen their squad. Having already bought Pierre van Hooijdonk from Celtic, they are returning to Parkhead to try and borrow Brian O'Neill, who can play in midfield or defence, for the rest of the season. The striker Ian Moore, who arrived this week from Tranmere for £1m, will be on the bench today when Liverpool come to the City Ground. The Anfield side, in second place in the Premiership, are right back in the title race following their unexpected defeat at Sunderland last weekend and their own stunning 4-3 win over Newcastle two days later. Liverpool have the luxury of no major injury worries today. Manchester United, now just one point in front, entertain Sheffield Wednesday at Old Trafford. Alex Ferguson, the home manager, welcomes back two players who have made rapid returns from injury. Nicky Butt is in line for his first start of the year at the heart of United's midfield as Roy Keane is still suspended, while Paul Scholes is fit just over a month after a cartilage operation. On Thursday, in a very relaxed interview granted to BBC Radio Five Live at the Cheltenham Festival, Ferguson insisted that his side have only one rival (Liverpool) for the title. That probably caused a few raised eyebrows at third-placed Arsenal, who are only three points behind United. The Gunners will surely be aiming for maximum points at the Dell today against a Southampton side much depleted by suspensions and injuries. Fourth-placed Newcastle, nine points behind United with a game in hand, might also wish to argue with Ferguson's assertion. The Magpies, who are still struggling to field a forward line, Les Ferdinand broke down 11 minutes after coming on as a substitute at Liverpool on Wednesday, and his aggravated hamstring injury is likely to ensure he misses out today and on Tuesday, when Newcastle go to Monaco for the second leg of their UEFA Cup quarter-final. "I have reservations about Les coming back as quick as he did," Kenny Dalglish, Newcastle's manager, said. "He thought he was fit and you can't fault players for wanting to play, but sometimes you've got to miss one match to catch the next four or five. The greatest healer is time and we will wait to see if he's ready [for Monaco]."



Australia's Wayne Riley, the defending champion, on his way to a 66 in Aororia yesterday

Photograph: Allsport

## Jonzon takes two-shot lead

Golf

While Seve Ballesteros missed his fourth consecutive cut, the Swede Michael Jonzon shot a seven-under-par 65 yesterday to lead by two strokes at 12 under on the second day of the Portuguese Open. Jonzon, 24, who almost failed to retain his European Tour card last year, changed his putter this week and picked up seven birdies - including putts of 30 feet and 20 feet - on his way to a two-round total of 132. The defending champion, Wayne Riley of Australia, had six birdies as he shot a 66 to stand two strokes back at 134. Also at 10 under was the first-round leader, Peter O'Malley of Australia, who had a 69. Jose Maria Olazabal, continuing his remarkable comeback after an 18-month lay-off due to a foot ailment, returned a 67 to lie five shots off the lead on 137. Ballesteros, Europe's Ryder Cup captain, shot a 72 for a half-way total of one-over-par 145. "Things didn't go the right way,"

said the Spaniard, who hooked off the tree-lined course three times. "I didn't manage to have a stable round and that's it." The misery continued for Scotland's Sam Torrance, who improved on his opening 81 by

11 shots but still bowed out with a seven-over-par aggregate of 151. Colin Montgomerie made a solid start in the Honda Classic at Coral Springs, Florida, shooting 68 Thursday to stand one

shot off the pace in a group of five players. Lee Janzen and Paul Stankowski shared the lead. Both Janzen and Stewart had a preview of the new TPC at Heron Bay course, designed by their fellow PGA Tour player, Mark McCumber. "I was excited about coming here and playing. I thought it would be a fair test, even if the wind blows," Janzen said. The wind did blow during the first round, and scores were higher than expected on this flat course with no out of bounds and almost no water. "There's more to this course than we first thought," Montgomerie said. "Suddenly the pins were tucked away and we were playing in tournament conditions. It was tough out there."

"I don't mind it blowing. In fact, what that does is take away the 63s and 62s, but it doesn't stop people from scoring 67s and 68s." A headwind certainly stopped most people from picking up shots at the last. It produced an average score half a stroke above its par of four.

## Brighton travel with renewed confidence

NICK HARRIS

As Brighton travel to Hull today, the away team's fans are confident that this season's highest battle - for the survival of the club - is almost over. An agreement was made on Thursday between Brighton's current owners and a consortium led by Dick Knight, a local businessman and lifelong supporter, which will guarantee the future of the club. Full details of the deal, which may include a move to a new stadium only 500 yards from the Goldstone Ground, will be announced as soon as legal matters have been finalised. Last night, Coral, the owners of the Hove greyhound stadium, confirmed that an approach had been made by Knight's consortium, seeking at least a temporary home. Brighton supporters have campaigned for years against the way the club has been run, and have staged protests ranging from pitch invasions to match boycotts. They were particularly unhappy with the chairman Bill Archer, after he sold the Goldstone Ground, but it is believed he will remain at club. Liz Costa, spokesperson for the club, said: "We've won the war, but the treaty hasn't been signed yet and there are still a few bullets flying around. "Dick Knight would not have got involved if he hadn't had the full backing of the supporters and now we've all got to back whatever he does." Fans are hoping for a change in fortunes on the pitch to match events off it, as they face this season's other battle, against relegation from the Nationwide League. In December, Brighton were 11 points adrift at the bottom of the Third Division and effectively facing homelessness. Now only one point adrift, Liz Costa is confident about their prospects. "Watch us fly," she said. "My God, we are going to do things. Everybody is behind the team and we know we've got a future."

## Sharks must be more ruthless

Basketball  
RICHARD TAYLOR

"Tough it out." That's the message from the Sheffield Sharks coach, Jim Brandon, to his players as they try to snatch the Budweiser League title from Exide London Towers and hold off the challenge from the Leopards, Peugeot Birmingham Bullets and Chester Jets. After his team beat Towers 100-93 on Thursday night, in the first of four matches involving the leading quintet in a week, Brandon said: "You can have all the class and finesse going, but they won't win you anything. "I've tried to convince my players all season that to win you have to play tough until the end, and against Towers they showed the message is getting through."

By contrast, the Towers coach, Kevin Cadle, fears his players are losing the plot. "I knew I could count on my previous teams having the determination to win. But I can't count on that with this crew." He reserved his most stinging criticism for the American Danny Lewis and his fellow guard Karl Brown, an England international. "The decision-making wasn't there against Sheffield and my guards are competing with each other," Cadle added. Alan Cunningham limped out of Thursday's game with a knee injury but is fit to face Birmingham tomorrow, although Towers have lost the American Joe Hooks for the rest of the season with a groin injury. Sharks travel to Chester tomorrow and are at home again to London on Wednesday. The leaders, Leopards, visit Thames Valley Tigers tonight.

**TODAY'S NUMBER**

**78,000**

The number of pounds staked by an Essex bettor on a bet to beat Wales in Cardiff today. An England victory will bring her £26,000 at odds of 1-3. The liford woman has already made £18,000 profit from her wagers on England's wins over Scotland and Ireland, but wisely resisted a punt on the defeat to France.

## Gloves are on for the girls

Boxing

Schools amateur boxing will soon be able to open its doors to female participation. Girls want to wear gloves at the grass roots of the sport will be permitted to try their luck from October according to Chris Andrews, chairman of the National Schools' Boxing Association, which stages its jubilee championships at the Aston Villa Leisure Centre on 22 March. "The recreational schemes we hold are very popular among girls and there is absolutely no reason why girls cannot participate as fully as boys," Andrews said. "The ABA, a member of the international boxing community, has gone along with national requirement that girls should be allowed to box com-

petitively with effect from next October. "Whether or not that will happen remains to be seen. Firstly there must be a good deal of preparation to be done through the rules and regulations that apply. Secondly there must be a sufficient number of women who want to box. "At the risk of being chauvinistic, there are a lot of people in boxing who have some reservations. But if women want to box and medically there is no reason why they shouldn't box, they should be allowed to do so. "Women in ring combat is a concept which is certainly gaining a professional profile in America. Britain has two women world champions: Jane Couch at welterweight and Cheryl Robertson at bantamweight."

**Athletics** Michael Johnson, the first man to win gold medals in the 200 and 400 metres at the same Olympic Games, yesterday won the 1996 James E Sullivan Memorial Award. **Badminton** TOMOKI KADONO (Japan) beat S. S. Suresh (India) 15-11, 15-11, 15-11 in 3 sets in the final of the 1996 BWF World Championships. **Basketball** BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION (USA) beat the USA 84-66 in the final of the 1996 NBA Finals. **Baseball** NEW YORK YANKEES beat the CALIFORNIA PADRES 5-4 in the final of the 1996 MLB World Series. **Boxing** JANE COUCH (England) beat the USA 15-11, 15-11, 15-11 in 3 sets in the final of the 1996 BWF World Championships. **Cricket** PAUL ROBINSON, the Gloucestershire first-team coach, has resigned to become sports coach at Clifton College, Bristol. **Football** England's Journal de France match against Brazil has been switched to Paris because the stadium in Paris, being rebuilt for the 1998 Cup finals, will not be ready on time. England will now meet the reigning world champions at Parc des Princes on 10 June. Their other two games in the four-team tournament are against Italy in Nantes on 4 June and against France in Montpellier on 7 June. Mark Kennedy of Liverpool and the Tottenham pair Steve Carr and Nwankwo Kalu have been withdrawn from the Republic of Ireland's B team for the representative match with the National League of Ireland select at Tolka Park, Dublin, on Monday. **Golf** SHOREHAM, the Sussex County League club, have signed the former Republic of Ireland star, John Byrne. **Ice Hockey** SHOREHAM, the Sussex County League club, have signed the former Republic of Ireland star, John Byrne. **Netball** SHOREHAM, the Sussex County League club, have signed the former Republic of Ireland star, John Byrne. **Snooker** SHOREHAM, the Sussex County League club, have signed the former Republic of Ireland star, John Byrne. **Tennis** SHOREHAM, the Sussex County League club, have signed the former Republic of Ireland star, John Byrne. **Volleyball** SHOREHAM, the Sussex County League club, have signed the former Republic of Ireland star, John Byrne. **Water Polo** SHOREHAM, the Sussex County League club, have signed the 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**On the City beat**  
Frank Clark talks football and music  
with Glenn Moore, page 30

## sport

**Walking a tightrope**  
Eric Hughes tells Dave Hadfield about  
his new life at Wigan, page 29

**FIVE NATIONS FINALE:** Wales and England search for respectability at the Arms Park's last international before demolition

# Final hymn at Cardiff cathedral

CHRIS HEWITT  
reports from Cardiff

The way things are going, this summer's Lions team can forget about dying business class to South Africa and negotiate a block booking on an air ambulance instead. So many obvious tour candidates are to be found among the walking wounded of the Five Nations that Fran Cotton's plan to send 35 fit players to take on the might of the Springboks looks optimistic in the extreme.

Yesterday, Lawrence Dallaglio emerged as the latest exhibit in a week-long gallery of aches, pains and cry-offs. England's blind-side flanker, not only a stone-cold certainty for a Lions place but a dark horse with flu-type symptoms here yesterday and was given only a 50-50 chance of facing the Welsh at the Arms Park this afternoon. Chris Sheasby, his Wasps teammate, was called in as cover but if Dallaglio fails a check-up this morning, Ben Clarke will play.

Today's championship finale has been so badly devalued by enforced absences – one very influential third of what might

have been an extremely dangerous Welsh side will not even be at the starting post and three other players are carrying injuries – that an England victory, rare enough on the far side of the Severn, would carry rather less kudos than usual. Indeed, defeat would leave Jack Rowell with the worst Five Nations record of his stewardship.

### Five Nations table

	P	W	D	L	F	Apts
France	3	3	0	0	87	57
England	3	1	0	2	107	42
Wales	3	1	0	2	81	72
Scotland	3	1	0	2	70	85
Ireland	4	1	0	3	57	143

Results: 19 January: Ireland 15 France 32; Scotland 19 Wales 34; 4 February: England 41 Scotland 13; Wales 25 Ireland 26; 15 February: Ireland 6 England 46; France 27 Wales 22; 1 March: England 20 France 23; Scotland 38 Ireland 10.  
Today: France v Scotland; Wales v England.

and more egg on his face than a down at Billy Smart's Circus.

Which is how a cynic might describe the sight of Dave Alred, widely acknowledged to be the world's leading kicking specialist, putting Mike Catt, Rob Andrew and Tim Stimpson through their paces at Sophia

Gardens yesterday. Alred has not been involved with the England squad for months; he has a contract with Newcastle, where Andrew, his favourite student, is director of rugby, but spends the rest of his time working with Super 12 sides in Australia or giving one-off tutorials to whoever seeks his expertise.

Andrew's bizarre recall to international duty this week as a direct result of Paul Grayson's hip injury, which left Rowell fretting about England's exposed position on the kicking front, paved the way for Alred's sudden reappearance. "Don't ask me what's going on with the Rugby Football Union," he said. "I just do as I'm asked and on this occasion, it was Rob who asked me down."

For whatever obscure reason – a reason that appears to embarrass Rowell, who this week directed all inquiries on the subject to Don Rutherford, the RFU's technical director – England appear either unable or unwilling to resolve the Alred issue. As an exercise in self-flagellation, it takes the proverbial biscuit. Andrew swears by the man and that should be recommended enough.

Rutherford revealed that England were hoping to finance a full-time kicking coach from next season, adding: "What Dave needs to do is tell us whether or not he wants to be a full-timer with the national squad. It is my view that I wouldn't like to see an England coach helping players from other countries improve their skills."

In turn, Alred pointed out that as he had been ignored by England he had been forced to make a living for himself elsewhere.

It is perfectly possible that England's chances of victory will depend on how much shine Catt's cobweb-infested kicking technique in the space of 24 hours. The Bath outside-half proved himself a more than adequate marksman during the three-match programme of



England's elder statesmen, Rob Andrew and Will Carling, renew their partnership in an unusual way yesterday

Photograph: David Ashdown

WALES v ENGLAND			
at Cardiff Arms Park			
N Jenkins	15	T Stimpson	Newcastle
S Hill	14	J Slighthorne	Bath
A Bateman	13	W Carling	Harlequins
N Davies	12	P de Glanville	Bath, capt
G Thomas	11	T Underwood	Newcastle
J Davies	10	M Catt	Bath
R Howley	9	A Healey	Leicester
C Loader	8	G Rowntree	Leicester
J Humphreys	7	M Regan	Bristol
D Young	6	J Leonard	Harlequins
G Lewis	5	M Johnson	Leicester
M Voyle	4	S Shaw	Bristol
S Williams	3	L Dallaglio	Wolves
S Quinlan	2	T Rothery	Northampton
K Jones	1	R Hill	Saracens

Replacements: 16 W Proctor (Leeds), 17 P Jones (Pontypridd), 18 A Bateman (Pontypridd), 19 C Loader (Swansea), 20 S Quinlan (Cardiff), 21 S Jones (Cardiff), 22 S Jones (Cardiff), 23 S Jones (Cardiff), 24 S Jones (Cardiff), 25 S Jones (Cardiff), 26 S Jones (Cardiff), 27 S Jones (Cardiff), 28 S Jones (Cardiff), 29 S Jones (Cardiff), 30 S Jones (Cardiff), 31 S Jones (Cardiff), 32 S Jones (Cardiff), 33 S Jones (Cardiff), 34 S Jones (Cardiff), 35 S Jones (Cardiff), 36 S Jones (Cardiff), 37 S Jones (Cardiff), 38 S Jones (Cardiff), 39 S Jones (Cardiff), 40 S Jones (Cardiff), 41 S Jones (Cardiff), 42 S Jones (Cardiff), 43 S Jones (Cardiff), 44 S Jones (Cardiff), 45 S Jones (Cardiff), 46 S Jones (Cardiff), 47 S Jones (Cardiff), 48 S Jones (Cardiff), 49 S Jones (Cardiff), 50 S Jones (Cardiff), 51 S Jones (Cardiff), 52 S Jones (Cardiff), 53 S Jones (Cardiff), 54 S Jones (Cardiff), 55 S Jones (Cardiff), 56 S Jones (Cardiff), 57 S Jones (Cardiff), 58 S Jones (Cardiff), 59 S Jones (Cardiff), 60 S 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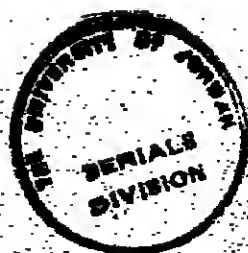
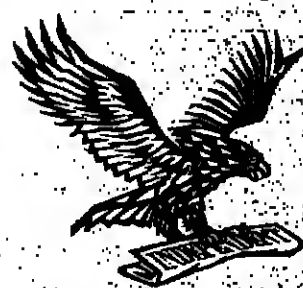


IMAGE OF THE WEEK

Dawn, and jockey John Jenkins takes his mount on a training gallop in the mists near Royston, Hertfordshire, before they headed off to the excitement and glamour of the annual race meeting at Cheltenham. Photograph by Brian Harris using a 105mm lens, 2000th of a second at f16. Film: 1,000 ASA. To order a print of this picture - it costs £14 - phone 0171-293 2534



# the long weekend

THE INDEPENDENT • SATURDAY 15 MARCH 1997

## WORDS OF THE WEEK



Two teachers injured when Thomas Hamilton ran amok in Dunblane shared their painful memories with Radio 4 presenter James Naughtie on the *Today* programme. Eileen Harriell (far left) is a PE teacher at the school and Mary Blake a teaching assistant

**Eileen Harriell:** Thursday's been a day we've been dreading. It's like, one more hurdle we're going to have to go over and it's been almost building up and up since the turn of the New Year. We've had a lot of hurdles to cross this year and now that we're nearing the anniversary, I know it's going to be an extremely difficult day for everybody. You know, we are encouraged because of the amount of concern and love and warmth we've had from the whole community and from everybody.

**James Naughtie:** Mary, there must be a sense of impending relief that that moment will have passed.

**Mary Blake:** I think we will be pleased when we get 13 March, Thursday, over, and then, I think we'll try and focus on the future and just try to lead our lives as normally as we can.

**James Naughtie:** Eileen, have you found yourself more resilient than you had expected?

**Eileen Harriell:** I think we all have in a strange sort of way. It's amazing where you get the strength to come through something as horrendous as this. I mean, at the beginning of 1996 if anyone had said to myself or to Mary or to anybody who had been involved directly with this, what kind of year we were going to have, we would never have believed it. I think everyone's shown great courage and strength and dignity.

**Mary Blake:** I think it feels quite unreal. We talk about it and I feel it's as if it hasn't happened to us and it does surprise me sometimes when we do talk about it and it's just, as I said, so unreal.

**James Naughtie:** You've both coped with it while you've been recovering from your injuries. What about the children who were nearby, who were aware of the horror of the event?

**Eileen Harriell:** Again, I think they individually coped very differently. My daughter was in a classroom very close to the gym and there was also a classroom, as you know, that the gunman fired upon. And I think some of these children are still having a very difficult time actually, and in their own way they are having to cope with it with the help of their parents and the school and so on. I think that's one of the things that's very important, that

we mustn't forget the people who were injured and the long-term effect that that's going to have on them. Some of the children were very badly injured and they're going to have to live with this. It's also just hitting home now because at the time Mary and I and the surviving children were just so grateful to be here. Now we're thinking, and we're having to cope every day with the realities of that event, and the children in particular are going to have to cope with the reality of that for the rest of their lives - and that's difficult.

**James Naughtie:** One of the things that strikes me is that there must be a tension between sometimes wanting to simply avoid the subject and not talk about it, but on the other hand, never wanting to feel as if you're letting go of your feelings.

**Mary Blake:** Eileen and I, we talk often about what happened on the day - in fact, I think every time we meet. I've said before, I am very grateful that - I know this sounds dreadful - but that there was someone else there. I find it's very comforting to have Eileen, just to have a chat, and I know that she feels exactly the same...

**Eileen Harriell:** Absolutely, it's very important, as Mary said. There's only two of us who actually knew, you know, what we experienced that morning, and even within the family as much as, you know, our families and the families of those directly involved

try to understand, it's very comforting for both Mary and I because, you know, the two of us survived, and we know exactly what we were going through that morning.

**James Naughtie:** Sometimes the town must have been under almost intolerable pressure. I don't mean from the inquisitiveness of outsiders, but just internally; the strength of the feeling, the depth of the trauma.

**Eileen Harriell:** I think we all need to stand back from it for a little while, otherwise tensions can arise, and we don't want that sort of thing.

**Mary Blake:** I find it quite difficult going down to the village. You know, they ask how I am, how I'm feeling, and some days if you're having a really bad day you don't really want to say I'm feeling dreadful. You just say, "I'm fine", and really there are days when we're not fine.

**James Naughtie:** People talk about good coming from bad, meaning that we shouldn't forget about the bad, but there are things that you can look forward to. What do you hope for? What do you look forward to?

**Eileen Harriell:** I'm looking forward to trying to have some more normality in my life because he past year there has really not been normality. And

to getting a physical as well as a spiritual and emotional recovery from this - it would be very helpful for us in Dunblane. And normality would return if we could feel that we had this [gun] ban, and that this sort of thing could never happen again. That was always the bottom line for us - that nothing like this could ever happen again with legal guns. I would like to see that we learn from this and we are more vigilant in what's happening to our children and what sort of toys they are playing with. You know, you wouldn't see a toy gun in Dunblane now, never. I think we have to be vigilant of what our children are watching on television, what kind of videos we are allowing the children to view, because they absorb the violence into their system. Mary and I know what it feels like when a bullet hits you, and it's not what they show on these screens.

**James Naughtie:** You've both talked about this anniversary as something that needs to be marked properly with dignity, but you've also talked about, in some sense, moving on after it is passed. How is it that you can start to keep the memory of the children with you, but at the same time somehow begin to distance yourself from the events of the past year?

**Eileen Harriell:** That's a very difficult question to answer. I think part of the way Mary and I coped was by distancing ourselves from it from the very beginning, because we couldn't take on just how awful it was anyway at the very beginning. The first anniversary, I think, is an extremely important landmark for everybody in the whole community of Dunblane. We're hoping that we'll be able to pick up the pieces of our lives, move forward, never forgetting.

**James Naughtie:** Do you want people to light candles on Thursday?

**Mary Blake:** Oh yes, I think that's very important. It'll be nice to know that everybody is thinking about us and the families.

**Eileen Harriell:** And the children, and that their light shines on and that although they are no longer here they are still loved and there's a little piece of them in all our hearts.

## INSIDE

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... and finds she wants to do things a dreamlike way **page 3**

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Wynton Marsalis's captivating 'Blood on the Fields' **page 5**

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# FREE GREENHOUSE WITH THIS MONTH'S VEGETARIAN GOOD FOOD

BBC Vegetarian Good Food magazine doesn't just contain great recipe ideas for when you don't want to eat meat. This month's issue comes with a free

24 page supplement - 'Easy Ways to a Green Home'. Find out how to save energy and money in the home, how to shop with a conscience, and

which appliances are greenest for your kitchen.

On sale now in your local environment





# Advance to Marlborough Street

William Hartston explains how to thrash the children at Monopoly.

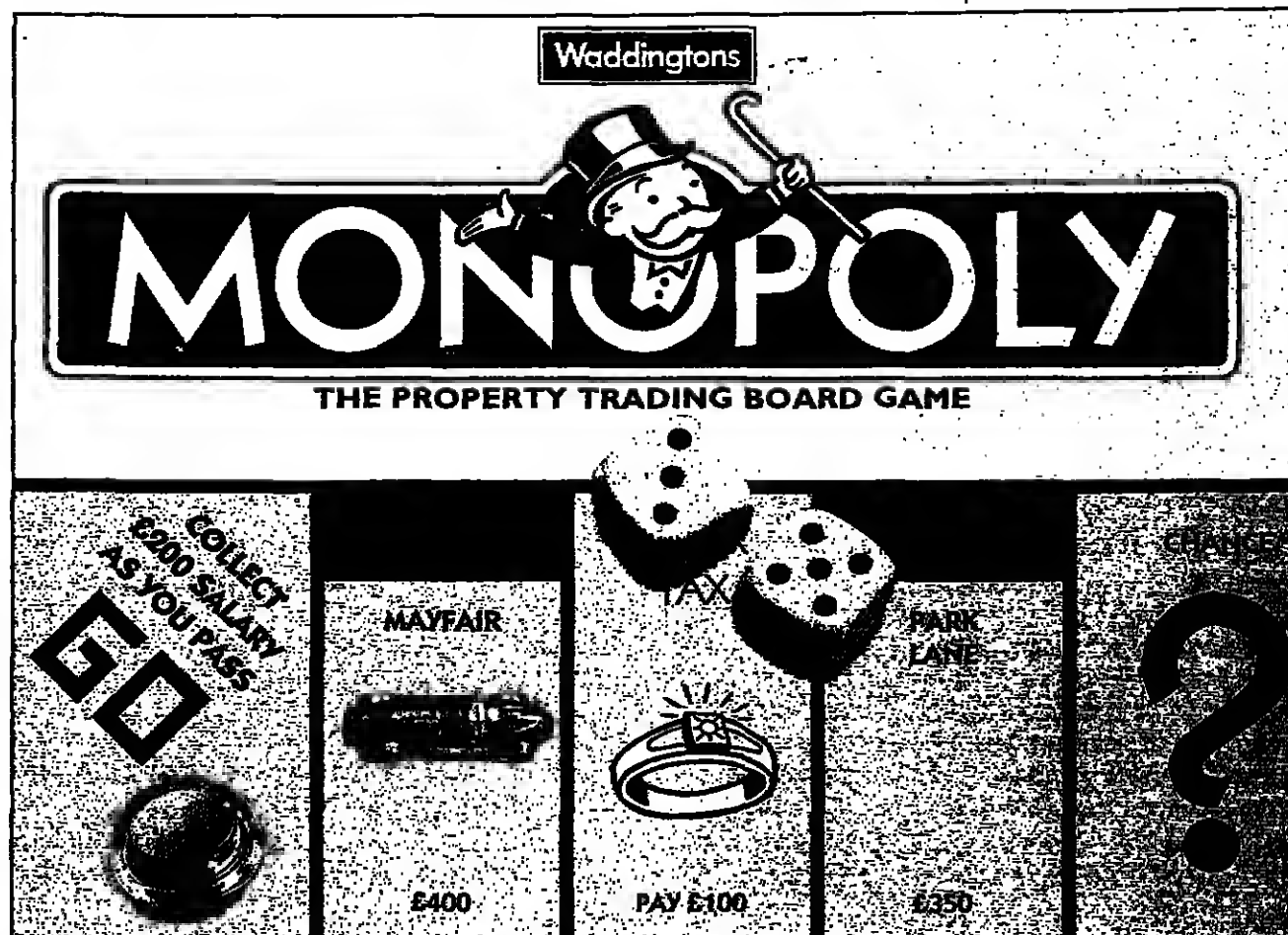
No game can be quite so popular, or unappreciated, as Monopoly. After more than 60 years in the shops, it is still the best-selling board game of all, yet in the opinion of Mike Grabsky, "99 per cent of people don't know how to play Monopoly". Many of us think we know how to play, of course, but we have probably never read the rules carefully enough to appreciate the level of strategy that the game allows. In Mr Grabsky's opinion, luck plays a far smaller part than most players realise. "It's a more skilful game than backgammon," he says. There are two keys to good Monopoly: one is to comprehend the basic economics of the game; the other is to understand why it was called Monopoly in the first place.

Actually, it wasn't called Monopoly in the first place. It started life as "The Landlord's Game", invented by Elizabeth Magie and patented in 1903. She saw it, however, as not so much a game as a moral lesson against the social evils of property speculation and unscrupulous landlords. Despite her high ideas and Quaker beliefs, however, it gained a good deal of popularity and began to be played in university circles around Maryland and Pennsylvania. Over the next 30 years, the rules were gradually refined and improved. In the 1920s, it began to be known under the name "Monopoly" (despite Ms Magie's disapproval). Finally, in 1933, an unemployed engineer named Charles Darrow, who is generally credited as the game's inventor, came across it, and saw its potential. He redesigned the board, borrowed the trinkets from his wife's charm bracelet to serve as the pieces, and started marketing it properly. Omitting to mention that the game was not his own invention, he submitted it to Parker Games - who identified 52 serious faults and turned it down. Two years later, however, when Darrow had sold 5,000 copies by his own efforts, they changed their mind. By autumn 1935, Parker were making 20,000 games a week to keep up with demand.

The name of "Monopoly", however, comes from an element in good strategy that few players appreciate. The complete set contains 32 green houses, and once those have been used up, no more properties may be developed until they are converted to hotels, or sold back to the bank. So one consequence is that if, for example, a player builds four houses on each of the three properties of two colour sets, it will use up 24 houses in all, leaving only eight to be fought over by the other players. You can take a large step towards bankrupting the other players by gaining a virtual monopoly over the housing market. That is why it is generally a mistake to build hotels. Four houses earn less rent, but considerably restrict the opponents' possibilities.

## New Game of the Week

Around 1970, in a TV series called *Me Mum*, Milo O'Shea enjoyed a game of "Pope-opoly" with ecclesiastical figurines moved around a board, and cards bearing messages as: "Go to Hell. Go directly to Hell. Do not pass through purgatory. Do not collect 100 plenary indulgences." Sadly Pope-opoly was never marketed. But "Seven Steps to Heaven" (£26.99 from ET Games, PO Box 3579, Redditch, Wores, B98 0HS. Tel: 01527-526608) may



Landing on a hotel on Vine Street will cost you £100 - but a better player might have stopped the building at four houses.

Apart from monopolising the houses, the most important aspect of strategy is to calculate your return on investment properly. Greedy amateurs may go for the Mayfair and Park Lane set, but the economics argue against it. The pair of properties cost £750, with development costs of £200 a house. So to build one house on each involves a total outlay of £375. By contrast, the orange set, Marlborough Street, Vine Street and Bow Street, cost a total of £560. For another £500 you can put two houses on two of the properties and one on the other, giving a total rent roll of £510.

Mayfair and Park Lane only begin to repay the investment when developed to the three-house level, and that is rarely possible early in the game. Only when the supply has been inflated by sufficient bonuses of £200 for passing Go is there sufficient money in the economy to allow the development of the high-price sites.

There's another thing too that makes the orange set a good bet: because of the "Go to Jail" square, and the Chance and Community Chest cards that have the

same effect, the Jail square is the one most frequently occupied. And since the majority of dice throws are in the range from five to nine, when anyone gets out of Jail he has a good chance of landing on one of the oranges.

This chance may be calculated precisely, as may other statistical aspects of the game. For example, since the average dice throw is seven, each player has a one-in-seven chance of landing on any individual square on each circuit of the board. Your expected income is therefore approximately one seventh of your total rent roll per circuit, per player. (This calculation is actually made a little more complex by the rule about having an extra turn when you throw a double, but even that may be taken into account if you really want to do things precisely.)

The main skill at the game, however, comes not in making such calculations, but in the negotiating skills needed to tempt the other players into doing the deals that enable you to form sets in the first place. According to Mike Grabsky, each game starts with about half-an-hour of quiet play, when everyone goes round

the board accumulating properties, but there comes a moment when everyone realises that progress can only be made - or one player can only be stopped - if some deals are done. Then play stops and you all start haggling. This is the vital moment and, according to Mr Grabsky, "it can get slightly nasty." It's vital not to be excluded from the deals, so sometimes you have to resort to threats. "If you don't sell me Trafalgar Square, I'll give Vine Street to Fred, and then you'll stand no chance." But the key to it all is to appear believable and trustworthy while having the mentality of a city trader.

Finally, here's another rule you've never read properly: "If a limited number of houses or hotels is left and two or more players wish to buy more than the Bank has, the Banker auctions them off to the highest bidder, starting at the lowest price shown on the relevant title deeds." Under such circumstances, houses on Mayfair and Park Lane may become a very attractive proposition. But nobody ever wins with the green set. Now go back to your constituencies and prepare to beat your kids at Monopoly.

## Cult of the Week

Following our launch of the cult of 103-ism last week, we have received news of several sightings including the following information from Samantha Hamilton:

"I enclose the following exciting discovery concerning the number 103 bus, running between Romford and the Rainham War Memorial. Adding together the positions in the alphabet of the letters in the destinations, ROMFORD (18+15+13+6+15+18+4)

= 89, while RAINHAM WAR MEMORIAL similarly adds up to a total of 192. Thus Rainham War Memorial (192) minus Romford (89) equals 103. Amazing isn't it."

Don Stallybrass also informs us that 103 is the number of asteroid Hera, which was in beautiful aspect to Christine, Karen and Henry last week. We could be on to something very important here. More 103s later.

## Games people play

Brian Sewell teaches Pandora Melly the joy of chess

Christopher Silvester, 37, writer and journalist.

I can remember having lots of Civil War soldiers. You lined them up and conducted fantasy manoeuvres like any child. I was very normal in that sense, except that I never played ordinary children's games; I hated football and cricket, and wouldn't go near a rugby ball. I remember going to pre-school and being encouraged to box. I was five or six, I think.

There was a period when I played a lot of snooker - in its cruder form where you can have fun based on pure fluke shots. Ordinary snooker is rather boring unless you have some skill. I made a couple of attempts to become a tennis player but without any lasting result, and I've had a stab at golf - my father is a golfer, my mother and stepfather too.

The three things that really grip me are a film, a book or a conversation, whereas playing games or taking part in organised activities my mind wanders. I suppose you could say there's a

lot of gamesmanship in the art of conversation, and certainly in seduction, where the rules are constantly changing. Of course I'm a bit of a fraud really, because I like playing with other people's emotions, but I'm not very keen when they do it to me.

I'm one of those people who always have to have rules explained to them over and over again. Poker is the only game I actually like. There are many variants: Texas Hold'em, which is much favoured by professional gamblers; Seven Card Stud and Ho-Lo. I had my first game of bridge recently and did quite well. I can see myself becoming a bridge player in time; it's the sort of thing my mother encourages me to do.

I wish I'd been forced to learn ballroom dancing.

Get happy with Victor Silvester and his Orchestra "In a Dancing Mood" and other titles on CD, £2.49 to £11.99 from Virgin Record Shops (0500-120012 for stores nationwide).

## Don't junk it... use it

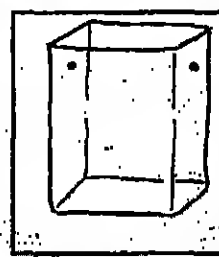
From washing machine to pencil case



All you need for this elegant and original pencil case is two identical fabric softener bottles and a nice piece of string of the type you find on the handles of shopping bags provided by the better stores in Knightsbridge.

Some people, when shown this design, suggest that one might equally make it from shampoo bottles, but that, of course, overlooks the fact that you have already used all your empty shampoo bottles to make computer mouse holders.

Anyway, you start by cutting off the top of one container to leave the piece that will serve as the body of the pencil case. Make two holes in it as shown in the

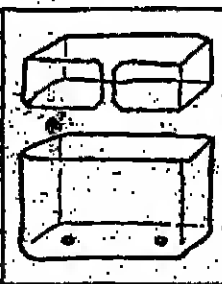


lower diagram on the left.

The other portion, hereinafter to be referred to as the lid, is made by cutting the other bottle lower down. Now comes the clever bit. To ensure that the lid fits the container snugly, you cut a thick slice from the remainder of one of the bottles. Snip a small section out of the slice, to ensure that it will fit inside the lid.

Use glue or double-sided sticky-tape to fix this strip inside the lid, with half its width protruding. The sticking-out bit then fits into the top of the case to hold the lid on.

By making two holes in the lid, you may also attach lid to case by threading your piece of decorative string through the holes, forming a carrying handle, while also holding the case shut and ensuring that you don't lose the lid.

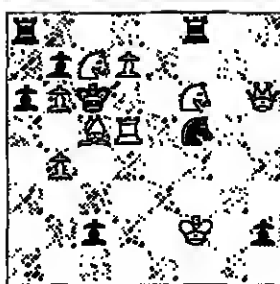


Do you have any good ideas for recycling objects that would otherwise be thrown away? If so we should be delighted to hear from you at: Don't Junk It, The Games Page, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL. We hope to recycle the best ideas at a later date in this column.

Bawn O'Beirne-Ranclough

The games page is edited by William Hartston

## Chess William Hartston



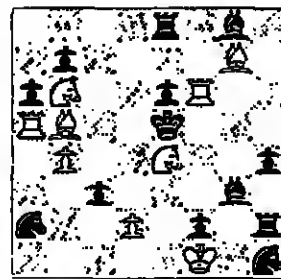
This splendid problem by Kraemer and Zepler won first prize in a composing tournament in 1935. It is White to play and mate in three.

With Black's king surrounded, it looks as though it ought to be easy, but most mating attempts run into the same problem: as soon as White moves his knight from f6 to open the line for the queen to the black king, he runs into a discovered check on the f-file. White could eliminate the troublesome knight with 1.Rxf6, but that abandons the rook's defence of the d7-pawn and lets Black survive until beyond move three with 1...Rxf6.

What White needs is either another way to get at the black king with his queen, or a way to get his own king away from the problems on the f-file. The solution accomplishes this in an astonishing manner. White begins 1.Kc1!! apparently walking into a variety of ambushes; but look what happens. The threat is 2.Ng4+ Nxh6 3.Nc5 mate. If 1...c1=Q+

2.Oxcl h1=O+, White mates with 3.Bg1. (Or if Black checks with a rook on e8 on the second move on this line, then 3.Be3 is mate.) If Black tries promoting his pawns the other way round with 1...h1=O+, then 2.Oxh1 c1=O+, then 3.Rd1 is mate (or 2...Re8+ 3.Re5 mate). Finally, and perhaps most difficult to spot, if 1...Ra8+ 2.Nxe8+ Rf6. White mates with 3.d8=N!

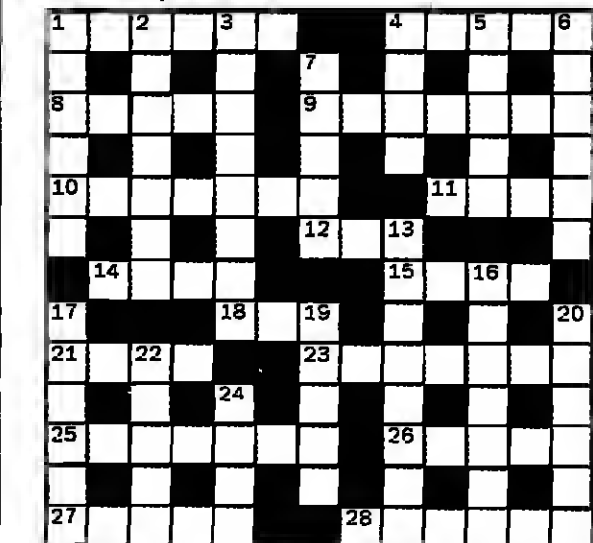
The idea of walking White's king into a barrage of checks is reminiscent of another classic three-move problem by Sam Loyd.



Here White is ready to deliver discovered checks on the fifth rank and on the long black diagonal, but his difficulty lies in providing a guard for the c4 and d4 squares. The main line of the solution is quite extraordinary: 1.Kc1!! f1=Q+ 2.Ke3!! when any check from the black queen, bishop or rook is met by a discovered mate. The other variations I leave you to work out on your own.

## concise crossword

No.3247 Saturday 15 March



### ACROSS

- 1 Make of car (6)
- 4 Herb (5)
- 8 Channels for fluids (5)
- 9 Defensive structure (7)
- 10 Young hare (7)
- 11 Agitation (4)
- 12 Club (3)
- 14 Operatic song (4)
- 15 German wine (4)
- 18 Rabble (3)
- 21 European capital (4)
- 23 Replies (7)
- 25 Olympic sport (7)
- 26 Passenger ship (5)
- 27 Cattle farm (5)
- 28 Besiegers of Troy (6)

### DOWN

- 2 Centre (6)
- 3 Get back (7)
- 5 Towards source (8)
- 6 Large volume (4)
- 7 Raising agent (5)
- 8 Complete (6)
- 9 Anger (5)
- 13 US-born painter (8)
- 16 Purify (7)
- 17 Consult together (6)
- 19 Canal boat (5)
- 20 Egyptian deity (6)
- 22 Cloth (5)
- 24 Desire (4)

Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:  
ACROSS: 1 Peace, 4 Super (Pea-supper), 10 Cleaver, 11 Fever, 12 Love, 13 Network, 14 Rake, 15 Blot, 16 Lease, 17 Devil, 18 Cavity, 19 Cavity, 20 Cavity, 21 Using, 22 Agitate, 23 Downy, 24 Eggs, 25 Cavalry, 26 Unfit, 27 Equivocal, 28 Scott, 29 Frank, 30 Broke, 31 Bole, 32 Axi, 33 Unfit, 34 Elching, 35 Hippo, 36 Edict, 37 Byres, 38 Lemon, 39 Sweet.

Apology - Today's Magazine Crossword No.92  
Two clues are incomplete. 34 down should read: Last place to rest closed before American tramp turned up (4). 35 down is: Cheers participant in pageant - a star! (4, hyphenated)

## Bridge Alan Hiron

Love all; dealer South  
North  
♠ 8 6  
♥ A K  
♦ 10 4 2  
♣ K J 7 6 5 4  
West  
♠ A Q 9 4 2  
♥ J 9 7  
♦ K 8 6 5  
♣ O  
East  
♠ 10 7 3  
♥ Q 10 8  
♦ O 9 7  
♣ 10 9 8 3  
South  
♠ K J 5  
♥ 6 5 4 3 2  
♦ A J 3  
♣ A 2

There was an unusual safety play for declarer lurking on this deal from rubber bridge. Would you have seen it?

To set the scene: South, with his filthy five-card major, opened 1NT (12-14 points) rather than 1♥. West overcalled with 2♦ to leave North with a problem. Would a bid of 3♦ be taken as forcing? It looked as though an invitational rise to 2NT was a possibility, but North reasoned that (a) if the club suit "marched" there could easily be at least nine tricks, and (b) if the

clubs did not behave there might not even be eight. So he boldly bid 3NT and all passed.

West led ♠ 4 against 3NT and declarer won East's 10 with his jack. Clearly the clubs had to be brought in and, equally clearly, East had to be kept out of the lead.

South, I am sorry to report, made the natural looking start of ♠ A at trick two. This would have worked well if West had held ♠ O, or ♠ O, x, or if East had started with ♠ Q alone or ♠ Q, x. - there would have been no temptation to finesse on the second round if both opponents had followed low. As the cards lay, there was no way to establish the clubs and keep East off lead. Consequently the contract failed.

Any ideas? What about ♠ 2 at trick two? Now declarer is home and dry in all the situations where the ace and another club would have succeeded and - wait for it - also as the cards lie, when all he has to do is allow West to hold the trick with his ♠ O. On lead, West can do no harm and declarer has five club tricks, two hearts, a spade and a diamond.

## Perplexity

### Mixed Doubles

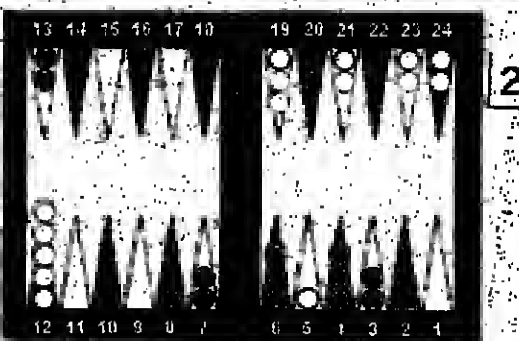
Eve, rapping across, grins like handy.

The above sentence conceals three loosely connected answers. All you have to do to find them is to group the six words into three pairs, then rearrange the letters within each pair. The sender of the first correct answer opened on 26 March will win a

copy of the new Chambers 21st Century Dictionary. Answers to: Perplexity, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL.

1 March answers: BRAINS plus BRAINS equals ANSWER works out as 469138+469138 = 938276, so SWINE = 82137. Winner: Jack Norwood (Leavenhath, Colchester).

## Backgammon Chris Bray



I reached this position in the "quarters" chouette in New York. (NB: in the US, they devalue everything by 100: a nickel game is actually \$5 a point, a time \$10, a quarter \$25 and so on.) How should Black play a 5-1?

I argued long and hard that we should play 13/8, 6/5. He did not like the risk of having two blots exposed and wanted to play 8/2, arguing that we could hit later, and that White would have trouble clearing all the men on his mid-point. We couldn't agree, but my partner was the captain in this three-handed chouette, so he played his move. White won some moves later when he redoubled us out in what had become a race. But who was right?

Back to basics. Black has given the cube away so White is in the game to the end. So Black must win using his men; he can never double White out. He has two possible plans: (a) he can close out White's last man (or get it behind a full prime), (b) he can race (Black trails by one pip after the roll) and hope to hit a shot as White brings his men around the board.

My thinking was: If White doesn't hit one of my blots I am very likely to close him out completely or at least get his man behind a 5 or 6 point prime. This will lock up the game and I will win a large number of gammons as well, because of the number of men White still has to bring home. If he hits one of my blots I have a secure anchor in his board and there will be many further chances to win as White will be a long way from a redouble. But if I play 8/2 I don't see a clear path to victory and the game will become a toss-up. Therefore I want to be aggressive and hit.

Years of experience proved to be right - later roll-outs showed the hitting play is much stronger. It leads to more wins and many more gammons and, after all, it is backed up by the oldest backgammon adage of all: "When in doubt, hit."



# The designer survivor

**W**hen Helen Storey was five years old, she was accidentally locked in a linen cupboard while playing hide and seek with her sister and brothers in the cramped basement flat in Belsize Park, north London where they all grew up. Rather than panic or collapse in childish tears, after 10 minutes in the darkness, "I started looking round for things to do. And I found my mother's wedding dress, inside a plastic bag. So I decided to try and work out which fabrics were which, just by touch alone - what was net, what was lining, what was boning, what was lace - and try to get a picture of the dress in my head. Everything just seemed to carry on from there..." Everything here means 11 years of being fêted as one of the most innovative and dynamic fashion designers in the UK.

Claustrophobia and darkness may not seem very likely seedbeds of creativity to the likes of you or me, but the texture-loving Ms Storey is different. She has a perverse streak a mile wide. Her deliciously rascally childhood was devoted to chronic shape-changing. She tried successively to convince us "tombos, hippie, skinhead, punk and glamour queen", never quite settling into one image for long enough. The iconic figure in her mind was, oddly, Edith Piaf. "I was attracted to her very early on - not her looks but her life. My mother used to play her records. I remember her humming 'Je ne regrette rien' over the ironing board, and her songs were in my head from an early age." But all that tragedy (I protested), the drugs, those ghastly men she got tied up with... Storey raised a sophisticated eyebrow. "I'm always attracted to people with trauma in their lives," she said. "I like it. There's something very real and gritty about people who've been through trauma. I like the blatant way they live their lives thereafter."

She should know. Helen Storey has had more than her share of upset, tragedy and heartbreak, her troubles coming not in single spies but in battalions; just as she was fighting to keep her million-spinning frock house afloat, her husband Ron (the company's financial director) discovered he had cancer - a T-cell lymphoma was spreading through his head, making him deaf and blind. He retired to bed for a year. Just as he began to recover, the business collapsed in ruins and its proprietor went on the dole. And as she was considering what to do next, the couple split up, overwhelmed by the strains on their relationship of illness and recovery combined.

Since then, she has made a living only through writing - a memoir of her traumas in the rag trade and the cancer ward called *Fighting Fashion*, and the beginnings of a career as a journalist, writing features for national newspapers. The day we met, at a noisy café in Islington, she had just come hot-foot from interviewing Katharine Hammett, the formidable progenitor of a million XL white T-shirts bearing the legend "58% DON'T WANT PERSHING". "She didn't tell me anything I didn't already know, but that was OK," said the new cub reporter. "I had a list of questions to ask, for which I needed answers, but she talked to me as a person rather than as someone who'd gone there to do a job. I thought she was very charming and very strong." Did it feel a little odd asking another designer the kind of things a journalist might ask? "The thing I like about not designing," she said smartly, "is getting to talk to designers. I love asking the kind of questions we wouldn't have dreamt of asking each other when we were all designers together."

A suspicious bunch, journalists tend to be rather sniffy about having newcomers, whether resting actors or deselected MPs, invading their ranks from other disciplines. But it would take a heart of stone to deny Storey a chance to shine. Our meeting in the café was delayed for several minutes as I prowled ineffectually round the tables trying to spot a woman who corresponded to the image in my head of an ethereal, wispy-haired, Biba-meets-Burne-Jones dreamboat in a Monsoon frock. "If she's anyone in this establishment," I told myself, "she certainly can't be that strong-looking woman with the severely yanked-back hair and sub-fusciculum sweatshirt and chinos coolly regarding me from the window seat..."

She was, of course. Storey, in her new incarnation as *The Survivor*, is a stripped-down, unpainted, clear-sighted, bullshit-detecting version of the creative idealist who once flogged sequinned corsets and tight black PVC second-skins to the likes of Cher, Madonna and Sandra Bernhard. She is more Gloria Gaynor than Edith Piaf these days. Her large and beautiful eyes regard you steadily, eyes that have stared death and financial ruin in the face. Her air of ineffable melancholy is occasionally subverted by a beatty laugh. She is warily friendly with strangers, as if convinced everything might go wrong (some cataclysmic misunderstanding)



John Walsh meets... Helen Storey

at any moment. But by the time you leave her side, you experience the strong feeling (a pretty rare one in interviews) that she deserves your support and you must go and do something about it *right now*. You must help her out. You must visit the banks who pulled the plug on her company, and condemn them, loudly and in public. You must comb the streets of Islington to find her a new backer...

"I'm not waiting for a backer any more," she says shortly. "I went through all that. I'm not in a state of mind for a career at anything. Having made a career in fashion very quickly, I'm not sure I want to go back to it in the same way as before."

How much of a designer is she still? "Oh, I'm *much* a designer. What makes me one is that I design from an emotional standpoint, rather than a practical one."

You mean your clothes aren't wearable? She smiled. "Well, no, occasionally they're not. And I think it's important that some parts of a collection *aren't* wearable. They're the future. They're the couture thought, if you like, and from it you can, if you're clever, commercialise it so it fits in with what everyone else is doing." She is very keen on what she calls "the Dream-

**Her large and beautiful eyes regard you steadily, the eyes that have stared death and financial ruin in the face**

world", that is, the adventure playground of sculpted fabrics and clashing textures where the creative side of a designer's brain can disport itself without having to worry about what the passing trade in the High Street will make of it. "While I respect the High Street, and it's clearly what everybody wants, I have to be myself, which means doing things in a dream-like way. Although -" she bridled, just slightly, "I must have done *something* wearable, since I was trading for 11 years."

She is the daughter of David Storey, the distinguished novelist and playwright who published *This Sporting Life* in 1960, won the Booker Prize in 1970 with *Saville* and whose plays - *In Celebration*, *Home*, *The Contractor* - were massively applauded in the Seventies, a decade when his work seemed to be a fixture at the Royal Court theatre in Sloane Square. Still only 63, his readers have not heard from him in some years, but says his daughter, "he's just fine. He's at that stage of his life where he feels he doesn't have to publish anything just for the sake of publishing it." It's with a slight *frisson* that you recall Storey studied at the Slade art school. Is that where his daughter's designer genes came from? Had he taught her anything? "Apart from putting a crayon in my hand, no." Was the house filled with her dad's pictures? "No. It was full of pictures by Philip Sutton, who was with him at the Slade. Those and the odd poster from one of his plays."

Helen recalls hanging out at the Royal Court at rehearsals of her father's plays - "it was like a second home to him, the other workplace outside his bedroom" - and meeting all manner of famous actors. "But as a child you've no sense of who they are or their greatness. They were just nice blokes or they're not. So I thought Gielgud was very withdrawn and Ralph Richardson was very warm." (Both men were starring in *Home*.)

At Harpenden Comprehensive, a school of hard knocks rather nearer Finchley than Flask Walk, she was pulled between twin impulses to be a ballet dancer or a punk, and endured the attacks of some deeply unpleasant youths who terrorised the corridors, groped her nascent breasts and stabbed at her with metal

rulers. "My father firmly believed in comprehensive education," she calmly recalls, "and was very disillusioned when he found out through me it wasn't working."

Helen wasn't working either, however, preferring to hit nightclubs and drink unfeasible quantities with her friend Sophie. Then one night, after smashing milk bottles and taking a swing at a policeman, she wound up in the cells. Sprung by her father at 4am, she abruptly stopped being a rebel. At Kingston Poly, she did an art foundation course and discovered a feel for clothes. "I loved experiments. I've always liked mistakes, which is commercially and professionally a dangerous thing to like. But I wasn't sure if I was going to be a sculptor, a painter or whatever. I was into making clothes that weren't 'made', putting together clothes without stitching. I made a knitted jumper full of holes and threaded with red ribbons, so the body inside would look like a human maypole. The head of the school came round and took my dabbings and mistakes for originality."

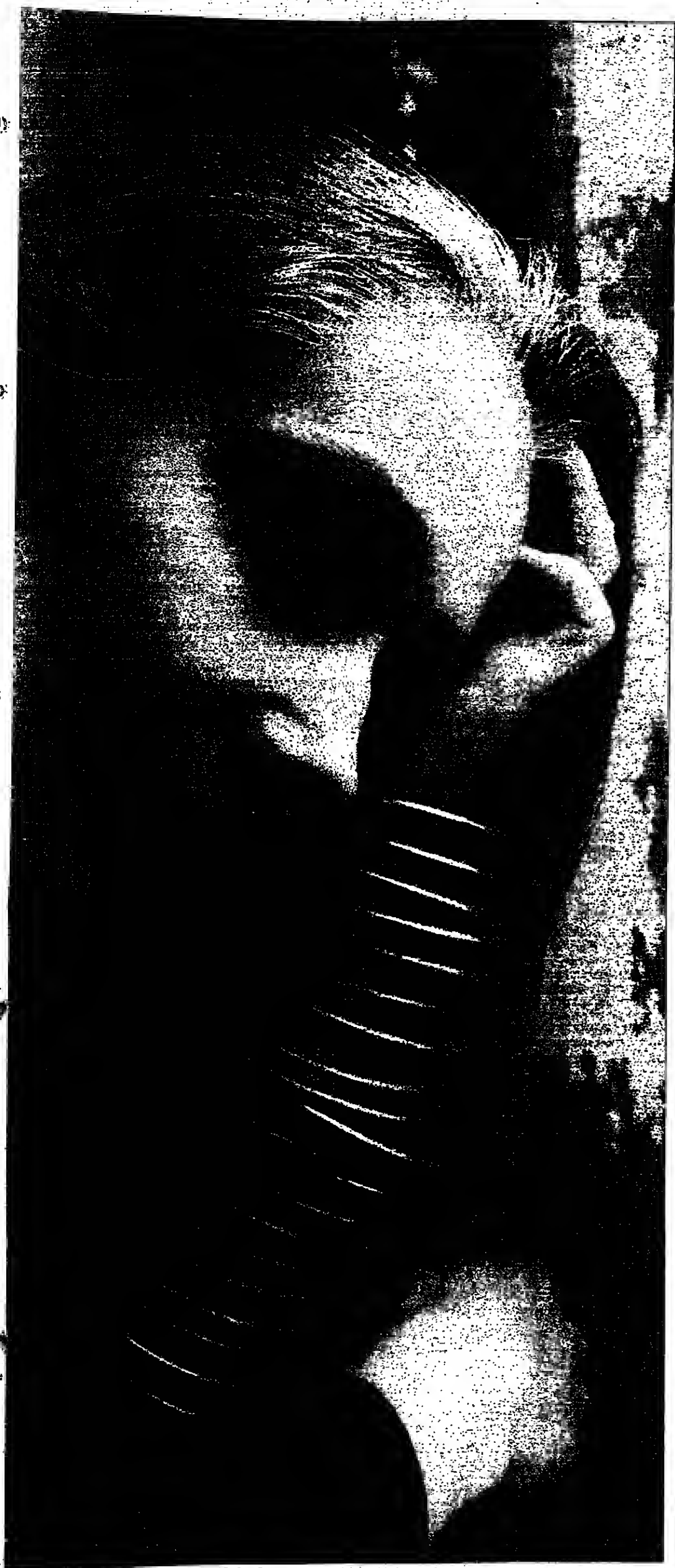
Such modesty. But none of it counted anyway, since she got a job at the Valentino salon in Rome and learned about the weirdly unreal, court-of-Versailles collective of neurotic enthusiasts and gypophantic popinjays that flap and flutter around a major-league designer; how a design on a sheet of paper is transformed (her words) "by a form of glorious madness" into a hundred frocks and jackets and blouses and unstructured fro-frou in the Paris shops.

She started her own label and opened her own shop in Newburgh Street, London. In 1984, her first catwalk show, in 1990, was titled "Rage" and featured some coolly extravagant sights - abbreviated sequinned shorts, lycra leotards in pop-art abstracts, a battle-field brasserie covered in bullets and a rose. Later, her tastes got wilder. Wherever you looked, there were draughty cutaway garments that sometimes looked like terrible accidents (the evening dress with cut-away bottom caused a lot of fuss). She dealt in fetishistic materials like rubber and latex, and threw in some Moschino-like subversions of the whole opulent fashion circus, making dresses out of council bin-liners, a box out of scraps, a ballgown out of men's shirts sewn together. "I did it out of guilt, I think, guilt at being a fashion designer. I thought you were supposed to hate your job, you were there to make money. Then I realised you could make money from doing what you enjoyed. Then I worried that it wasn't really a profession. And my answer was to make something out of rubbish. Something's always drawn me down to more earthy things..."

Noting the trouble her excesses have caused in the past (in one show, the models had to parade up and down their faces hidden behind the heads of birds or the antlers of deer), I wondered if she concerned herself over the dignity of the human body. Was she in the business of dehumanising it? "Hummm. Rather selfishly, I often think of the body as just part of my design process. I don't design to protect the body. But the part of my work that's most publicised only accounts for about three per cent of what I do. Behind the dress with the bare arse, there's 10 versions of it, complete with arse, and they're the ones that end up selling in Paris."

The story of her success and where it all went is documented in *Fighting Fashion*, plainly told and full of nightmares, as huge orders come in from America. "One order was a quarter of a million quid, which for a little girl was a lot of money. It was for thousands of dozens of items - we had to add extra columns on the order forms" and she discovers that the banks won't underwrite her against losses. She will be appearing at the ICA on 24 March to talk about her experiences. What advice will she give aspirant designers? Don't go into fashion? Don't trust banks. "The only real answer is: leave. Go abroad. Certainly get the clothes made abroad. And if you can, get financed from there too. The other thing is not to rely on third parties. I really admire Katharine Hammett, who's grown her whole company off the back of her income, without any bank loans. It's the same with Paul Smith. They're probably the biggest successes we've got at home and look how they managed without any outsiders."

She has to run. Storey has to take her son Luke, 10, to a football match. "Every bloody weekend is training," she says fondly. "Thai and the Spice Girls..." After that she'll go back to her modest house in Willesden Green, to write her interview and worry about where the next cheque is coming from. Storey is handling the fallen-idol stuff very well, considering the losses she has sustained - of love, money, career, success, profit, reputation, stuff like that. The only thing that stops you swearing undying fealty to this resilient heroine is the certain knowledge that she'll be back in business before the year is out. She may despise the fashion business for its flakiness, its volatility, the things it did to her, but you just know the enrap-tured little girl in her soul will always be around, fingering fabrics in the dark.



Helen Storey: handling the How-are-the-Mighty-fallen stuff well, and biding her time

PHOTO: NICOLA KURTZ

**W**e await the rewrite of *Henry V* by Sir Jocelyn Stevens, and his lieutenants at English Heritage. Something along the lines of "Can we cram upon this wooden 'O' a luxury block of flats, an office block perhaps?" On Wednesday, I stood outside the fenced-off site of the original Globe Theatre - the famous wooden 'O' - with Mark Rylance, the artistic director of the reconstructed Shakespeare's Globe a few hundred yards away and the actress Zoe Wanamaker, whose late father was the guiding spirit behind the project.

They were bewailing the decision of English Heritage to outlaw any further excavations on the buried ruins of the theatre. The empty Grade II listed building that stands above it is to be converted into luxury flats and Eng-

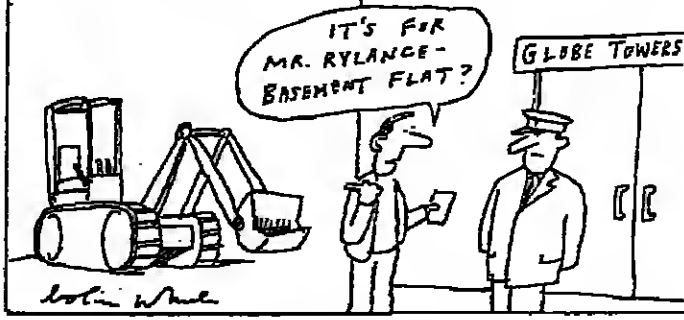
lish Heritage say further excavations would mean the building's demolition. Nonsense, says Rylance. They would not disturb the flats at all with the minimal drilling that the research needs. But English Heritage is adamant and Southwark Borough Council has decreed "the permanent burial and commemoration" of the Globe's remains.

The research into the original Globe would have determined the size and shape of the stage of Shakespeare's theatre. Rylance's eyes blazed as he compared it to finding a new play. Cutting off this research mid-stream is something we might expect of property developers, but of the government's advisory body on preserving our heritage! It is simply scandalous. I would go much further than Rylance and ask why there has to be a building above the



David Lister  
arts notebook

original Globe at all. Aren't there enough luxury flats in London? Shakespeare's theatre should be excavated completely and become a tourist attraction and centre of scholarship and historical research in itself. It would be in America, where they seem to honour England's heritage rather more than does English Heritage.



Here is a joke told at the Comedy Store in London last Monday. What do you call a cloud with legs? Answer: a sheep. And it wasn't even the way he tells 'em. The Comedy Store was hosting an evening of German humour with a gathering of German comedians giving a bemused, if not always amused, audience an insight into that coun-

try's famous funny bone. Here is another joke that failed to have them wetting themselves. "Captain Kirk had to get the Starship Enterprise fixed. He asked Scotty how long it would take. Scotty answered, four weeks." Geddit? I'll explain anyway. Apparently waiting four weeks to have even a terrestrial contraption fixed in Germany is

unthinkable. Not surprisingly, this concept didn't translate very well. The funniest moment for me came when one of the German comedians questioned the Comedy Store management backstage about the billing for the evening which was called: "They always win on penalties." It's just a joke, he was assured. "But it's not true. We have a better football team," the baffled comic insisted. Enro-comedy may be one area where we will never get a single currency.

A press release arrives from architect Sir Norman Foster saluting the success of a campaign he "launched last year" to clear car-parking from Horse Guards Parade in London. Could this campaign be in any way related to the campaign we launched in *The Independent* in 1994 to clear car-

parking from Horse Guards Parade in London? Sir Norman is not alone. At least one other newspaper has claimed the campaign as its own. *C'est la vie*.

More importantly, it is worth remembering that our campaign to clear parked cars from cultural and historic buildings and surrounding spaces has not yet had total success. Horse Guards is a victory, despite the squeals of anger from Downing Street civil servants who parked there. The Royal Academy and the Courtauld Institute are certainly on the way to removing cars from their historic forecourts. But the British Museum, our biggest tourist attraction, is proving intractable. Its forecourt, which could have sculptures and an outdoor café, is blocked with staff cars. Shame on them.



# arts & books

## Mean, moody and magnificent

POP Moody Blues Royal Albert Hall, London

"I'm just a singer in a rock 'n' roll band." But Justin, what's with the "just"? You are mega-rich, you've sold 60 million albums and tonight sold out the Albert Hall as well. Like a sonic seal you and the album, boys basked in a warm pool of appreciation based on long years of loving fandom and at least three greatest hits albums. You sang this crowd out of puberty in the Sixties, through love and marriage in the Seventies, into the suburbs with their kids in the Eighties, and will still be entertaining them in rounded middle-age when the millennium dawns.

And they are going to make you even richer. If they haven't yet replaced their vinyl copies of *On the Threshold of a Dream* and *To Our Children's Children's Children* with digitally remastered CDs, they will. For a cohort of The Generation, some Moody Blues tracks – "Tuesday Afternoon", "Question" – are going to be played for ever and ever, amen.

As for being a rock 'n' roll "band", at the Albert Hall there was a full symphony orchestra, two percussion sets, two keyboard kits, two backing singers as well, of course, as Justin Hayward and John Lodge on guitar, Graeme Edge on whimsical verse and drums and Ray Thomas on flute, tambourine, harp and the sweet, if rather stiff, body movements of a 55-year-old. All that, two cylinders of dry ice and a stroboscopic lighting scheme which gave us enough quasi-psychodelic blobs and whirls to remind us of days of future passed.

To call Justin Hayward and the Moody Blues a

rock band is a bit like calling David Frost a satirist – a past identity has given way to something altogether grander. The Blues are an institution. The concert programme called them "rock's most vital and unique resource". In their time much imitated, they can claim to have invented the concept album: they first used a mellotron and gave us rock with big string backing. They are the group that launched a thousand AOR stations.

"Age has not withered them," said a poet a little more original than Graeme Edge. (He got the embarrassment of his verifying out of the way at the start of the show when he came on in the dark and intoned several lines of numbing banality that it takes a real fan to stomach.) No, age has been relatively kind to a band that always had that soft chasing-the-clouds-away side to it. Justin Hayward and John Lodge did a bit of business along the stage front with their guitars but it's parody and we all laughed.

Committed, gut-churning rock, it wasn't. What this "greatest hits" concern offered was two well-turned back-catalogue sets, showcasing each of the four in turn. Musically, the orchestral arrangements were not elaborate. The Moody Blues have not "grown" since the summer of '69. But why tamper with a winning formula?

"I know you're out there somewhere," Jason sang. He did not have to look far. Before arthritis sets in, the Moody Blues will sell out big venues as often as they care to play them.

David Walker



Felicity Kendal as Amy (right), seduced by Michael Pennington's maverick MP

PHOTOGRAPH BY GEMAIN LEWIS

## Laying waste the idealist

Harley Granville Barker's play casts a penetrating eye on political sleaze

THEATRE Waste Old Vic, London

The Peter Hall Company's repertory season at the Old Vic gets off to a stimulating start now with his production of Harley Granville Barker's *Waste*. "Sex, sleaze and politics for the general election," runs the ad, which would sound a shade opportunistic or a more suitable selling line for some Doug Lucie drama, if it weren't for the fact that Barker actually delivers in all those departments.

A famous casualty of censorship, this play was refused a licence in 1907 on the ostensible grounds of its outspokenness about sexual relations and its reference to "a criminal operation" (ie abortion). The real reasons for the ban were, in all likelihood, political: the play casts a penetrating, deeply undeluded eye on the country's cynical inner circles of power. Using the author's 1926 rewrite (which updates the proceedings so as to bring in the new bargaining strengths of the union-backed Labour Party, ref-

erences to Sinn Féin, etc), Hall calls the piece, "the most effective play about politicians since Shakespeare". That's probably pushing it a bit (I can think of a longish list of rivals for that title beaded by *Danton's Death*). Barker's drama is certainly remarkable, though, for the acuteness with which it demonstrates two types of waste: that the idealist will always be disposable among men principally concerned with forging deals that help them cling to power; and that to be an idealist can involve the wastage of whole areas of a man's personal life.

Michael Pennington is excellent in the central role of Trebell, a maverick independent MP who wants to disestablish the Church

of England and to devote the money released to the cause of a great new educational system. An eminently practical visionary, he has made getting his Bill on the Statute Book a condition for aligning with the Tories who, on the verge of regaining power, want to ditch the Opposition for years to come by stealing some of its programme. The hollow expediency of the party's commitment to Trebell and his plans is exposed when the married woman who was briefly his mistress, dies after a back-street abortion and the politician is threatened by scandal.

I've often complained that Pennington is a cerebral, chilly, unsensory actor, but these qualities are perfect for Trebell, a precise, cant-hating, clinical man who even seduces Felicity Kendal's overly arch Amy as if impatiently working through a committee agenda. The play brings him to a tragic sense of the cost of these politically valuable attributes and of placing all his capacity to love in a cause. This recognition is

prompted partly by his being discarded by the Tories. The superb, darkly droll scene of a conclave at the home of Denis Quilley's urbane cynical leader, dramatises the ironic, half-accidental circumstances of his being dropped. There's no problem from the wronged husband (Greg Hicks) who agrees to keep quiet, or from Trebell, who says that, if need be, he'll own up. The difficulties are – hypocritically manufactured by an elderly, bumptious, unloved MP, as soon as he picks up the fact that one of his enemies in the party will resign if Trebell is ditched. A great programme of reform expires amidst pettiness and patch-ups.

It is also paternal feelings for his dead child that push Trebell towards suicide and, to give these weight, the play has (uncomfortably) to demonise Amy, for her decision to abort. But that's not to doubt the genuineness of the hero's tragedy: discussing himself as if he were already posthumous, Pennington's Trebell remains heartbreakingly low, the donnish, glacially smiling methodicality of manner that he masked the human waste. To 26 April (0171-928 7616)

Paul Taylor

## Voyage of discovery

CLASSICAL Stravinsky, BBCSO/ Andrew Davis; Matrix Ensemble Royal Festival Hall; St John's, London

The BBC's Stravinsky series *Rights of Spring* has treated us over the past 10 days to a feast of the composer's music, a lot of it unfamiliar. Two concerts by the BBC Symphony Orchestra, under the invigorating lead of Andrew Davis, ranged widely over his astonishingly varied output, while Robert Ziegler and the Matrix Ensemble explored, among other things, the Russian period that first brought Stravinsky to international prominence.

The startling journey which took the composer from youth to octogenarian mastery was dramatically illustrated in last Thursday's concert, where we heard the early Symphony in E flat, composed under the tutelage of his composition teacher, Rimsky-Korsakov, immediately after the "Aldous Huxley Variations", that astonishingly compressed masterpiece from the 1960s. A friend once asked me how long I thought the Variations lasted. To his delight, I fell into the trap, and supposed about 12 minutes. They are, of course, under half that length, but Stravinsky's masterly concentration of structural means made it possible to suggest, as he would have put it, 12 minutes of felt time in five minutes of ontological, or real, time.

All of this was superbly suggested by Andrew Davis and the BBC players, although they only truly nailed the music's taxing details in a repeat performance, given, Davis told his audience, in order to prove the composer's point that the three exquisitely textured 12-part Variations make a different expressive effect each time we hear them. As for the symphony, exuberantly presented by Davis, there is little to mark except the extraordinary affinities both thematically and texturally with Glazunov's

Fifth and Eighth Symphonies. In truth, despite its charm, there is hardly an original moment in this work, which is the more odd considering that *The Right of Spring* was only three years away.

The programme also included a sparkling performance of the Violin Concerto, with Kyoko Takezawa a bright but never brittle soloist, and Davis tautly in command. In fact, Davis seems particularly in tune with those neo-classical works that Boulez, for instance, another contributor to this concert series, has always dismissed. This was borne out by Davis's marvellous reading of *Persephone* the previous week. It was an interpretation that positively glowed, the chording in Stravinsky's exquisitely weighted textures breathtakingly poised. Wonderful singing by the BBC Symphony Chorus and New London Children's Choir, a beautifully judged commentary by Irene Jacob, and Donald Kaasch's accomplished tenor completed the picture. It was followed by a powerfully intense *Oedipus Rex*, whose vastly different classical world was no less masterfully captured. Jon Garrison, Louise Winter and Alan Opie were outstanding soloists and Samuel West narrated with flair.

Which leaves the Matrix Ensemble's Sunday evening concert. It was notable for a lively rendering of that inimitable burlesque, *Renard*, beautiful singing by Susan Roberts and Mark Tucker in the *Canzona*, and a rare performance of the *Four Russian Peasant Songs* for ladies voices and four horns, exhilarating in its rustic verve. The BBC Singers' Matrix concert will be broadcast tomorrow, 9.45pm, on "Choir Works", Radio 3

Anthony Payne

## NEXT WEEK IN THE INDEPENDENT

### MONDAY MEDIA+

Our 32-page section that takes on everything the press, television and advertisers throw at us. And asks why

### TUESDAY NETWORK+

Cutting edge know-how on computers and IT

### THURSDAY EDUCATION+

Our unbeatable section for everyone who educates, is being educated or cares

THE INDEPENDENT IT IS...ARE YOU?

REVIEW			
	THE FILM	THE PLAY	THE BALLET
	The English Patient	Lady in the Dark	Dance Bites
overview	Writer-director Anthony Minghella's multi-Oscar nominated \$30m screen version of Michael Ondaatje's Booker prizewinner is an epic love story starring Ralph Fiennes, Kristin Scott Thomas and Juliette Binoche, scores by Gabriel Yared, edited by Walter Murch and produced by Saul Zaentz. Cert 15, 165 mins, across the country	The London premiere of the Moss Hart/ Kurt Weill/ Ira Gershwin show about glamorous Liza Elliott (Maria Friedman) seeking therapy to avoid cracking up. With Charlotte Cornwell and James Dreyfus. Designs by Adrienne Lobel and Nicky Gillibrand, directed by Francesca Zambello. At the National Theatre, London (0171-928 2252)	The Royal Ballet's brief tour of a six-part evening of works by new choreographers Cathy Marston, Tom Sapsford and Christopher Wheeldon and established names William Tuckett, Matthew Hart and Ashley Page, including the final performance by Adam Cooper, the star the company should never have let go. The tour is over but some of the names will reappear.
critical view	Adam Mars-Jones praised the "relentlessly beautiful" film. "Minghella's touch is so sure." "An intense epic, both sweeping and fiercely intimate... the film crackles with a palpable sexual charge." "The performances are flawless, more surprising are the fluency, poetry and scale of Minghella's direction," said <i>Time Out</i> . "You can take your brain to <i>The English Patient</i> and you will not be insulted," approved <i>The Times</i> . "Ravishing," drooled <i>Arena</i> . "If Scott Thomas doesn't win an Oscar there's no justice. Same goes for the film," asserted <i>GQ</i> . "Falls short of greatness," carped the <i>Standard</i> .	Paul Taylor found it dated and the "obstinately unthrilling production does it few favours... Friedman is badly miscast." "Horrid costumes throughout... Zambello has directed the show in much the same way that Friedman performs the title role: as various kinds of artificiality... over-choreographed, trite, bogus," the <i>FT</i> . "Friedman is one of our finest musical-theatre talents but... she never comes close to moving you," shrugged <i>The Daily Telegraph</i> . "Friedman's stellar performance," saluted <i>The Guardian</i> . "The supporting cast is fine and Friedman more than fine," cooed <i>The Times</i> . "What are you waiting for?" cried the <i>Mail</i> .	Louise Lévêque was distinctly unimpressed. "If the Royal Ballet persists in such a low-key touring programme there is a very real danger that the nation's taxpayers will wonder what all the fuss is about." "We positively regretted we had wasted a whole evening on too much that was shoddy and worthless," thundered the <i>Sunday Telegraph</i> . "Too many eggs in one basket, not all of which hatch... generous in its courses, what it lacks is a main dish," worried <i>The Sunday Times</i> . "Opens most promisingly with a thoughtful work by Cathy Marston... it was left to Ashley Page to produce the most accomplished dance of the evening," declared <i>The Times</i> .
our view	Minghella's leap into the major league is almost unprecedented. Go.	Good score, hopeless design, helplessness. Thank God for Charlotte Cornwell and James Dreyfus.	Touring small-scale work is fine in theory but there was too much of too little merit.



# People power



Wynton Marsalis has turned the hardships of slavery into sublime jazz. By Phil Johnson

A three-hour oratorio about the history of slavery where the audience comes out 'whistling the tunes has to count as some kind of a triumph. *Blood on the Fields* by Wynton Marsalis

— who wrote both the music and the libretto, and who performs the work at the Barbican on Tuesday with his Lincoln Centre Jazz Orchestra and the three featured vocalists of John Hendricks, Miles Griffith and Cassandra Wilson — is an extraordinary achievement by any standards.

While the London concert is sold out, everyone will have a chance to hear it soon when the Sony CD of the piece is released. Though previously Marsalis's music has, despite his abundant gifts as a trumpet soloist, tended to err on the side of a rather dry classicism, *Blood on the Fields* is compellingly emotional. As Marsalis is a controversial figure in jazz, whose disdain for the avant-garde and for popular black music forms such as rap has earned him his share of enemies, this is his best defence yet. Indeed, it's a counter-punch that it may be difficult to recover from.

Dealing with the experience of American slavery from the middle passage to arrival in the New World, the work resonates with the whole history of jazz, from fabled field-calls and hollers, to gut-bucket New Orleans blues, ecstatic gospel

ulation's, and the elegant, Ellingtonian measures of classic Harlem swing. The musical story doesn't stop there, of course, as the historical material is played from within a contemporary, post-modernist, idiom where the cool-school harmonies of Miles Davis and Gil Evans, and the splintered orchestral voicings of Charles Mingus provide much of the dominant colour.

Each of the three vocalists brings their own contribution too: John Hendricks — the veteran scat-singer — gets to do his thing in one mesmerising solo-feature that will surely stop the show; Cassandra Wilson, who is the most affecting female jazz singer since Billie Holiday, Betty Carter and Shirley Horn, adds her deep-voiced melancholy and incomparable country-blues feeling; while the gospel-trained Miles Griffith, on the face of it a less powerful singer than Hendricks or Wilson, supplies the necessary sense of balance through his deacon-like strength, as well as lending a suitably churchy vocal response to the calls of the orchestra's congregation of horns.

The music of the 14-piece band is full of glorious, bravura effects that hark back to the earliest days of jazz, with Marsalis's own trumpet-crowling, whinnying and barking in the opening number in a way that recalls the first-ever jazz recording by the Original Dixieland Jazz Band 80 years ago. With the orchestra built around several key personnel from Marsalis's own small

groups, he has been able to write for particular instrumental voices, and thus use the expressive potential of the soloists to the full. Though the written score is complex and exacting, there's still plenty of room for improvisation.

"I always tell the musicians that they can do what they want with the music," Marsalis told me last week. "It's just an outline, but the voicings for when the horns are all playing together, those can't change. There's a lot of room for the rhythm section to improvise, and there's a lot of improvisation going on around that between the rest of the band. I know the personalities of the musicians, because with most of them I knew them when they were younger, and they came up with me."

If we could have expected Marsalis to get the music right, the accomplishment of the libretto is still something of a shock. Though Marsalis has written before, contributing a stylish, aphoristic and often witty text to the book *Sweet Swing Blues on the Road*, from 1994, where short essays or impressionistic sketches act as a complement to Frank Stewart's photographs, the poetry of some of the lines from *Blood on the Fields* rewards close attention.

"I think I hear a drum. I think I hear a drum / Playing proudly, pounding, saying softly, come," from Cassandra Wilson's opening song, gives an idea of the way he uses rhythm, and this is extended in the almost Brechtian device of having lines voiced in chorus by the orchestra to preface each movement, which Marsalis conducts as if they were musical phrases. His feeling for the poetic gesture and its place within a context of jazz performance is evident in *Sweet Swing Blues*, where he writes that: "Whenever somebody plays something good on our bandstand, we jokingly cup our hands together, reach down, scoop up the sound, and pour it all over our faces like we're bathing in it."

*Blood on the Fields* was premiered in New York, at Lincoln Centre's Alice Tully Hall, on 1 April, 1994. It was received with extravagant praise. A star since his first recording as a leader at the age of 19, Marsalis, now 35, has not produced anything so completely satisfying before, despite a number of attempts at extended forms.

Moreover, the history of the extended form in jazz has never been a particularly fruitful one. Apart from the suites of Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn, there has been little that sounds like more than a compilation of themes, perhaps as a result of the generally haphazard and under-funded nature of most jazz commissions. *Of Blood on the Fields*, Marsalis says that: "With something that long, it's always the form that's difficult. The problem is one of keeping the form together, and I had never done the words myself before. The story is one thing that makes it easy to keep it organised. I know how I want it to sound but it's difficult because it's so big. In mixing it for the album, the problem is the dynamics — what's loud and what's soft."

That *Blood on the Fields* has proved so successful might be due to several things,

though the presence of the vocalists and hence the need to write proper tunes is probably paramount. Certainly, the theme of slavery, and its inevitable contemporary resonance, is one that Marsalis feels deeply. Nor does he see any great sense of liberation in present-day American society. "Slavery is just the same social and political stuff as is organised today," he said. "It's people being stripped of their dignity and not given the opportunity to participate. Nowadays it's reflected in people being put in prison, in being subjected to misconceptions in the media, and in incorrect perceptions of groups of people."

Accordingly, *Blood on the Fields* offers no great messianic sense of release from bondage. The libretto ends on a note of cautious optimism, with the repeated refrain of the closing number, "Freedom's in the trying / Walk on through the door" preceding a last African impression from the chorus, and the hand's final theme. The songs, though, are something else, especially when delivered by Hendricks and Wilson. They have such a wonderfully stubborn, indomitable feel to them that they really do bring a rare, authentically humanist sense of grandeur to the work. And if you can whistle that, there has to be hope somewhere.

*Blood on the Fields* is performed Tues. Barbican, London, EC2 (0171-638 8891). Some tickets may be available on the day; the CD is released on Sony.

**Slavery is people being stripped of their dignity**

**We scoop up the sound and pour it all over our faces**

## I want to be a clone

Hollywood's duplication complex started long before Dolly skipped into view, says John Lyttle

From the column inches devoted to Dolly the sheep, you'd think that until now no one had ever considered "the commercial, moral and cultural implications of cloning". Ah, Hollywood has. As befits a system geared to getting the public to swallow *Die Hard 2* and *Die Hard with a Vengeance*, the same goddamn story three times in a row. Indeed, cloning is the perfect metaphor for contemporary Hollywood itself, hence its high-obsessive interest in the pros and cons of duplication.

Not that cloning proper has ever quite paid off at the box office. As Joe Roth, head of Disney Studios, recently opined: "I've never read a cloning script that I wanted to make." But that was before the world said hello Dolly. Now the industry is looking to the summer release of *Alien 4: Resurrection* in which Sigourney Weaver, disposed of in a vat of molten metal in *Alien 3*, is regenerated from a single rescued skin cell and then separated from the monster embryo she carried in the preceding picture. Advance word suggests that, in keeping with President Clinton's hand wringing, *Alien 4* highlights what was submerged in *Alien 3*: the erosion of women's reproductive rights. What price motherhood — even to a monster — when the shadows in white coats have made it quicker by tube? As *Alien 3* predicted, the issue is control. So small wonder the hills of Beverly are alive with the sound of once discarded scripts being dusted off. Here

comes a thriller about nurse who finds that a mysterious "new" patient is actually herself — her future self, sent to replace her, as the robot Maria usurps the place of the real Maria in Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1926). Talk about an identity crisis.

Tapping into the Zeitgeist is what Hollywood does best. As is covering all the angles. As the prophetic *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956) suggests, even "dehumanisation" is in the eye of the beholder. *Invasion* has been declared dystopian, because for the *Homo sapiens* "original", doubling-up turns out to be a form of death: the self is not complimented, but displaced. (A notion lifted from twin movies — in *The Dark Mirror* and *A Sinner's Life*, someone has got to go.) The surface remains the same, but the spark that makes you (supposedly) unique is gone — an indulgence Dr Pretorious, playing God, archly dismisses in *The Bride of Frankenstein* (1935), that early venture into reproduction without sex: "The soul. Can you touch it, smell it?" One imagines many of today's scientific community, in the face of hype and hostility, bursting to quote him, but not daring. Those aid grants, you see.

As the pod people, and Pretorious, with his miniature beings, imply, it's not so much our vaunted spirituality that is offended but our vanity. The imitation of life, on the other hand, views itself as an "advance", an "improvement". Except it's science, not nature, taking the next evolution-



It's a fair copy, giv. Fritz Lang's 'Metropolis' (1926); 'Invasion of the Body Snatchers' (1956)

ary step, a message the Michael Keaton comedy *Multiplicity* (1996) also subliminally peddles. Adjusting to the stress of contemporary living is what forces Keaton to split into four to cope with work and home, though the cautionary message is that his copycats turn out coarser, camper, dumber and, worse, believe they deserve autonomy — that they are individuals too.

Recognition is what the replicants of *Blade Runner* (1982) also crave. Cuck the slave force scenario beloved of the Left, and watch the clones rebel to demand basic civil rights: rights that must be denied so the idea and ideal of "human" individuality can pass muster. Arguments dismissed as sci-fi piffle then but that in recent weeks have been reconstituted as lofty editorial.

These are not questions that overly trouble the men of Stepford, who routinely murder their flesh and blood wives in favour of identical, but wholly passive partners. *The Stepford Wives* (1975) is less about acting the Deity and — here we circle back to Sigourney and Doc Frankenstein — more

## Brian Friel: What's the question?

THEATRE Give Me Your Answer, Do Abbey Theatre, Dublin

Something of a serpent with its tail in its mouth, Brian Friel's wambling new play, *Give Me Your Answer, Do*, is a curiously self-conscious piece about a bankrupt, elderly Irish artist. Tom Connolly (Tim Hickey). Mystically prodded through a wine-drunk afternoon by his wife, Daisy (Catherine Byrne), he quixotically evades the issue of whether to sell his manuscripts — including personal, never published work — to the agent (Darragh Kelly) of a Texas university, or whether to face the nightmare of a blank page.

One wonders, after *Dancing at Lughnasa*, whether this is a dilemma that really ails Friel. What seems more at stake in this drifting, fragmented, self-indulgent script is the plight of a "serious" writer, fighting against the constraints of past success.

Opening and closing with the strangest and most unexplained shadow over all the proceedings — Connolly's mute daughter, Bridget (Pauline Hutton), a drooping, cross-eyed sanatorium patient receiving electroshock treatment for an unspecified "nervous" ailment — the play wallows in the bleak, dignity-crumbing effects of age on three inveterate couples: here converging on a Scrabble-and-alcohol afternoon on a sunlit lawn.

The Connollys, at the end of the day, emerge as the sanest of the lot. Daisy's parents are Jack (David Kelly), a dandified, pathetically kleptomaniac cocktail pianist; and Maggie (Aideen O'Kelly), a self-deluding, chair-bound, arthritic, retired doctor. Enter the over-the-top frivolity of Tom's best friend and chief rival — the popular novelist, Garret Fitzmaurice (Dus McAleer) — and his acutely vicious middle-class wife, Grainne (Frances Timelty). Like all the women, her vivid button eyes constantly strip her husband of the least temporary arrogation of self-respect.

What emerges from the icy savage, glancing encounters is a cruel and depressing depiction of the ageing, upper-holhemian, Irish drinking classes. Friel's constant theme of post-colonial decay is heavily overstated in Frank Hallinan Flood's set. But there is something unbridled in Friel's portraits of dissembling rival-writers: despotic agent-creatures, talking "ugly money"; and, most crucially, the indolent parasitic wives — vicariously withering every inch of their husbands' ineffectual hopes.

Maybe it's meant as a paean to their lot — but this is a deliberately inconclusive piece of writing; marooned somewhere between memory and confused contemporaneity. No matter how closely you follow the will-o'-the-wisp of Friel's substantial intelligence, it's very difficult to run the more disturbing elements to ground. And yet, the show delivers quite a number of emotional stabs — often preserved in a nostalgic waft of, say, Mendelssohn or Fats Waller.

Directed by Friel himself, this show has some serious *longueurs* and off-notes. It might have worked better with the interpretative counterpoint of another director, but Friel's fetishistic attention to his own text does worm its way uncomfortably into some private recess of your mind.

Mic Moroney

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# Screen-age children of chaos

Pat Kane surfs in from cyberspace to explain the digital revolution

It's almost become normal, this place called cyberspace. Morning radio presenters reluctantly mumble "at-something-dot-co" for their listeners' correspondence. After-hour pub conversations, while collars askew, begin like this: "Christ, I had 40 e-mails today." Cybercafés pop up in the dreariest backwater high streets while net terminals quietly appear in public libraries and the homes of relatives. My mother-in-law bought a Pentium PC with her retirement money a few months ago. Like the Walkman, video and camcorder, the Internet looks like another of those world-shattering technologies that becomes slowly normalised by the muffled textures of British life.

So it's perhaps not the best moment for these three examples of American cyber-evangelism to hit our shores. The small but significant cloud raining on their parade is the recent collapse of the UK edition of *Wired* magazine. Despite the high numbers of computer enthusiasts in this country, there was no real market for *Wired*'s Californian ideology about "the digital revolution" – nor also, perhaps, for its aggressively free-market politics. Given the opposition parties' joint commitment to a national information infrastructure, what seems more likely in Britain is a digital reformation – the Internet and its uses seeping into the cracks and pores of everyday institutions (the school, the hospital, the office), helping to lubricate a social cohesion that already exists.

When reading these books, however, a nagging question arises. If the British manage to make cyberspace horing, will we miss out on the Revolution? In *Children of Chaos* (HarperCollins, £12.99), Douglas Rushkoff is already out there on the barricades, arguing that a whole new planetary consciousness is being created by Nintendo kids and Japanimation fans. Donna Haraway pushes the boat out even further in *Modest Witness @ Second Millennium* (Routledge, £14.99), arguing for a feminist politics which sees no boundaries between computers and their users,

human and non-human. Even John Seabrook – a *New Yorker* writer, whose *Deeper: a two-year odyssey in cyberspace* (Faber, £12.99) is reassuringly humbling – began his online journey thinking that "politics, ethics, and metaphysics – all the great disciplines of mankind – are ... yours to make again".

*Deeper* ends with Seabrook's computer making unstoppable fart noises during a crucial meeting with the *New Yorker* editorial team – which should alert you to the book's intentions. This is cyberspace as an extended episode of *Friends*, the dalliance of a talented young professional with the latest lifestyle option. Seabrook mixes wise-cracking and soul-searching in equal measure. Quill-peo British readers will also enjoy his brahmin background. While browsing through an on-line archive, he is reminded of "walking through the Princeton boathouse in the dim light after crew practice". Trying to account for the compulsiveness of net-surfing, he quotes a line from Eliot's *Four Quartets* – "distracted from distraction by distraction".

Where Seabrook renders the Net as extended coquetry, Douglas Rushkoff sees it as only one sign of a completely new civilisation. *Children of Chaos* refers to what Rushkoff calls the "screenagers" – those 12- to 25-year-olds in Britain and America whose consciousness is built from MTV, SuperMario, retro television, the joysticks and mouse-clicks of cyber-tech. Although his book sometimes reads as if dictated from under a virtual reality helmet, Rushkoff is to be commended for trying to link chaos theory and cultural critique so lucidly. When so much science is now invoked to limit our options – Darwinist psychology and sexual neurology being two recent culprits – it's a change to read something that emphasises play and creativity as a norm of human nature.

But Rushkoff embarrasses as much as he enlightens. The brilliant counter-intuitive readings of street culture that might work across a producer's table (Rushkoff "devel-



ops content for TV and the Internet, wouldn't you know) sometimes don't quite stretch to grown-up subjects. Bosnia's bloodbath, for example, tests the author's faith in the positive evolution of human culture. "If you take a goldfish that has been kept in a tiny bowl and release him into a lake," Rushkoff helpfully adds, "he will swim in tiny circles for quite a while before he realises he has more room." The goldfish, in case you don't get the analogy, is Bosnia.

Donna Haraway would probably regard the goldfish as a non-human

ally in the struggle against piscine incarceration. Rarely has the much-maligned subject of cultural studies produced such a case for the prosecution. Her bizarrely titled *Modest Witness @ Second Millennium: Female Man (c) Meets Onco-Mouse(tm)* has one extraordinary premise, hammered through its appallingly written slabs of interdisciplinary babble. In the age of genetics and informatics, everything – whether human or non-human, organic or inorganic – is a political agent, and should be treated as such. You don't believe me? Here we

go: "Any interesting being in technoscience," writes Haraway, "such as a textbook, molecule, equation, mouse, pipette, bomb, fungus, technician, agitator, or scientist, can – and often should – be teased open, to show the sticky economic, technical, political, organic, historical, mythic, and textual threads that make up its tissues." Bonkers? Possibly.

What's irritating about this book is that there was never a greater need for an articulate critique of science, at a time when we are more than ever (in one of Haraway's hap-

pier phrases) "bodies of data". But how do you begin to grapple with the expanded range of human choices that digital technology and bioscience now offer if the guidebooks are as useless and bemused as this?

Perhaps the difference between cyber-cultures across the Atlantic lies in our lack of a frontier mentality. Our national dream is not the American one – that of unlimited space traversed by sovereign individuals, improvising their society into being, using technology (whether gun or modem) to

exploit the wilderness (whether natural, or digital). To his credit, Seabrook keeps making this connection – to his own parents, grandparents and great-grandparents, all hucksters and grafters in the grand tradition of American blue-sky enterprise.

No matter how pro-entrepreneurial the British parties of business claim to be, they will never infuse the next century with the same Whitmanesque fervour. They will sing the body electric; we'll curse the bloody electronics. Which is probably as it should be.



## A week in books

In December 1995, two school exercise books filled with a childish scrawl arrived on the desk of Olivier Orban, editorial director at the French publishers Plon. The manuscript came via a lawyer and purported to be the journal of a teenager called "Chimo". He presented himself as a 19-year-old beur (second-generation French Arab) who lived on a sink estate in the Paris outer suburbs; the rundown *banlieue* at the end of the Metro lines.

Published last spring, *Lila Du Ca* titillated and scandalised literary Paris with its tale of a 16-year-old streetwise blonde. This "angel with the mouth of a whore" spins erotic fantasies for her young swain as an escape from the "chaos and misery" of their surroundings. The book proved to be a runaway bestseller; foreign rights went for a vast sum, and David Watson's fine translation will appear from Fourth Estate next week as *Lila Says* (£9.99).

Now, the French love bookish mysteries and hoaxes; and they have plenty of previous when it comes to concocting them. In 1975, the novelist Romain Gary won the Prix Goncourt under the mask of "Emile Ajar". And when it comes to anonymous literary porn, remember that the authorship of *The Story of O* fuelled salon chatter for decades. (It was in fact written by Dominique Aury, a distinguished – and far from masochistic – publisher who attended board meetings at

Gallimard well into her eighties).

Fans of the French blend of erotica and exotica that dates back at least to Flaubert's *Salammbô* will enjoy *Lila Says*. Yet it sounds to me about as genuine as a 25 franc note. A touch of *Carmen*: a hint of *La Traviata*, not to mention all those 19th-century tarts called Lola: mix those flavours with French curiosity about the mysterious East in their own backyard and a smidgeon of the social conscience evident in Mathieu Kassovitz's film *La Haine* (a much more credible work), and you have the recipe.

Behind this cunning package, you can almost smell the *Gitanes* of some middle-aged Left Bank intellectual and taste his late-night inspirational Scotch (Chivas Regal or Black Label, if I know the type). In a typically improbable allusion, "Chimo" even nods to his own cultural pedigree. He talks of the short journey taken by the slumming bourgeois who come to the suburbs for cheap sex and stolen goods as "this trip to the Orient, this dip into the secret world of the harem".

If the author truly turns out to be a badly-educated young *beur* from the high-rise wilderness, I shall happily treat the team at Plon to the best *couscous royale* in town. Intrigued readers may reply: so what? All talented writers mimic distant voices and imagine lives far from their own. True, but the chances of a real kid with a passion for the written word emerging from the semi-gothic into the Parisian limelight remain as slim as ever. For more than a decade, one in seven French voters has backed Europe's most successful Fascist party, the *Front National*. Governments have responded with a string of clampdowns and round-ups intended to bully the genuine Chimos into silence. Whatever *Lila* and her *poter* may want to say, the French state and its *lits* still answer with a curt "shut up and get back in your box".

Boyd Tonkin

## Bowled over and out

Tibor Fischer's new novel is an empty vessel, writes Simon Louvish



Tibor Fischer: 'naïf characters'

*The Collector Collector* by Tibor Fischer, Secker, £12.99

Being reviewed is a lucky dip for an author. One person's opinion is transmitted as a general cachet or black mark. In the past, Tibor Fischer has attracted the plaudits of such luminaries as Salman Rushdie, John Updike and A.S. Byatt. This time he's got me. Tough.

This prizeable done, I can no longer delay my reluctant response to a fellow author: this book is truly terrible. Fischer's first novel, *Under the Frog*, was a justly acclaimed tragicomic vision of the Hungary of his parents' generation, a place of young men twisting in the gyre of an idiotic regime, culminating in the romantic and ill-fated rebellion of 1956. "As a Hungarian," a friend told the hero of that book, Gyuri Fischer, "you should be prepared for the odd cataclysm."

His second book, *The Thought Gang*, shifted this cataclysmic and anarchic vision into a contemporary tale of a philosopher who prefers bank robbery to academia. At one point, a friend of the protagonist suggests he would be at his best if he was sent back to the era of the Greeks, whence he could "communicate to us via red figure Attic vases."

In *The Collector Collector*, this is precisely what happens. The protagonist, a Sumerian howl, has been passed down over the ages, the perfect epitome of the "been it, seen it" syndrome. A great opportunity, you might think, to ruminate on the eternal foibles and follies of humanity.

But what happens? The eponymous bowl, in keeping with its sly origin as boozey philosopher Eddie Coffin of *The Thought Gang*, spends the bulk of the book involved with two stereotyped women, Rosa, the art expert, longs for a good man to

love but keeps dating nerds and creeps; Nikki, a sluttish ex-prostitute, drops her knickers at the slightest pretext and does her best to destroy Rosa's life. Instead of eternal wisdom, the bowl appears to represent a kind of English football-hooligan laddishness, despite its detours into tales of past human inanities.

A Tiborian thought: Why are all the people who own a Sumerian bowl, through the centuries, such outright dickheads? At certain moments a coherent grotesquerie emerges, as when the bowl reflects, on eating, that "every creature on the planet is trying to persuade the rest of the planet into its stomach."

This is the Tiborian universe: a world of unmitigated exploitation, stupidity and mindless violence. The rot set in in *The Thought Gang*, which depended on the reader accepting that inflicting pain can be inherently funny. But that book had chutz-

pah, genuinely surreal moments, a proper zing and many other words beginning with Z. This one has a succession of naïf characters, unbelievable events and an obsession with dicks, tits and various euphemisms for sex which might appear hilarious in a bar at one-thirty am.

I have no doubt at all that Tibor Fischer can write, conjure with words, play with language, make you turn the page. The question is, to what purpose? In *Under the Frog*, he wrote about things that mattered deeply: youth, desires, dreams and their destruction under the treads of tanks. He is not the first, nor the last author to fetishise violence in lieu of any other outlet for the expression of the malaise of our times – a deep-seated loss of faith in any values untainted by hypocrisy, selfishness and omnivorous greed. I just think it's *shlubish*. Bring on the Thought without the Gangs.

## When Pythagoras took off his skirt

The culture of physics is infested with blokeish fantasies, says Jenny Turner

The Old Testament we've known for ages. The new one, we've had for close on 2,000 years. But what about the Very New Testament, revealed in 1993? "And the Lord came down to see the accelerator which the children of men builded... And the Lord sighed, and said, Go to it, let us go down and there give them the God particle, so that they may see how beautiful is the universe I have made..." I particularly like that "go to it". Quite an improvement on old King James.

*The God Particle* is the name of a book by the US astrophysicist Leon Lederman. "Essentially a long argument for why America should fund the now defunct \$10bn Superconducting Supercollider," says Margaret Wertheim, the book also contained "the unmistakable implication... that particle physics is a direct path to the Deity". Hence the Very New Testament episodes, inserted in *Celestine Prophecy* fashion here and there in the text.

"It is not at all clear whether Lederman's theologising comes from a genuine religious faith, or scientific hubris," writes Wertheim, "or just a

Pythagoras' Trousers: God, physics and the gender wars by Margaret Wertheim, Fourth Estate, £9.99

desire to sell books." But doesn't it look as if Lederman, whether in a fun or a cynical spirit, has just decided to try his hand at writing junk?

Margaret Wertheim is an Australian science journalist who works in the US. This book's argument, as she presents it in her introduction, is elegant and compelling. From Copernicus to Stephen Hawking, there has seldom been a famous physicist who did not pepper his formulae with references to "God". But scientists aren't supposed to be religious. Are all these physicists secret mystics at heart?

At the same time, physics is of all vocations (with the exception of the Catholic clergy) the one that has been most hostile to women. Ergo, the culture of physics is patriarchal and priestly. It excludes half the human race, on irrational grounds.

The story begins with Pythagoras of Samos (of the famous theorem), apparently one of the first Greeks to start wearing trousers instead of the more usual skirt. Pythagoras first started thinking about the universe in terms of fundamental mathematical relationships: odd and even, squares and triangles, structure and event. He also invested numerical relationships with emotional and cosmic significance: 216, for example, the "pythagonic cube" of 6 x 6 x 6. And he may have allowed the odd woman to join his inner circle, although they would have been at a bit of a disadvantage as, in his system, femininity = odd numbers = bad.

The story goes on with Copernicus and Kepler, Galileo and Bacon, Einstein and the quantum-mechanical cats. The basic structure of Wertheim's book is the traditional

pageant-through-history: ancients, middle ages, Renaissance, Enlightenment, modern times. Within that, we get pocket biographies of all the big male prime movers. These are followed by shorter, feminist-apologetic sketches of the women, from Hypatia on, who might have been prime mover, too, if the men had let them. The argument quickly loses its dynamism and so, very noticeably, does the prose. The sophisticated "cultural history" of physics we were promised never really turns up.

Most disappointingly, Wertheim's book completely loses sight of its most interesting goal: a natural history, as it were, of how physics through the ages has been motivated by fantasies about universal mastery and God. Instead, it attempts to make complex points about how sexism, religiosity and social irreverence feed into one another (as they obviously do on some level), but in an unhelpfully simplistic way.

For example, there is something deeply blokeish about Lederman with his God Particle fantasies and his ginormous Supercollider. But how could physics possibly not be infested

with blokeish will-to-power fantasies, given the world we live in and the past it has had? That's just our basic reality, as all-pervasive as the air we breathe. No amount of weak-feminist if-onlying is going to change that.

At one point, Wertheim cites admiringly the work of a woman biologist who won her Nobel prize, apparently, for, uh, "listening" to her plants. If only they'd had a women's room at Los Alamos. They could have sat around "listening" to their little lumps of plutonium, and spared humanity the trouble of the atom bomb... That's a cheap stroke, of course. I know that Wertheim doesn't intend such a fatuous comparison. But the trouble with this sort of history is that's exactly what happens when such a work falls into the wrong hands.

The woman biologist deserves better, as do women in general. And so, pre-eminently, does the history of physics, both in its patriarchal, cultish aspects and in the nobility of its endeavours ever since that founding moment when, for the first time in western history, Pythagoras took off his skirt.

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Edith Sitwell's literary archive reveals a generous, eccentric life, writes Diana Souhami

Selected Letters of Edith Sitwell edited by Richard Greene, Virago, £20

When she was 17, Edith Sitwell was sent to pawn her mother's false teeth. She got 10/6 for them. Whisky (it was 1904) was 12/6 a bottle. Her mother, Lady Ida Sitwell, had a drink habit and uncertain morals and in 1915 spent three months in Holloway for fraud. Sir George Reresby Sitwell, MP, historian, tyrant and Edith's father, owned 6,000 acres and the family estate Renishaw, near Chesterfield, where Edith and her brothers Osbert and Sacheverell endured childhood.

"I don't believe there is another family in England who have had parents like ours," Edith wrote to Osbert. "Please see to it that I am cremated. The other thing would be too like living with father. They called him Ginger, the Red Death, the old beast and the old horror. Edith said he spent his life dodging the taxman. She and her brothers suspected he was finally murdered by a banker called Woog who embezzled their inheritance."

She said her "nervous system was ruined for life" before she was ten. Such comfort as there was came from her governess Helen Rootham, and as adults they lived together in a London flat. She resisted visiting Renishaw "in case they get a grip on me again". When Helen got cancer, Edith's letters to and about her were full of despair and generosity.

In 1970 the previous editor of Edith Sitwell's letters, John Lehmann, was not permitted to include any to her mother, father or brothers. It was a fatal omission. Her formidable parents, and her love of her brothers – their shared horror of "the Gingers", their praise for one another and their mutual protectiveness – were at the root of her identity as a woman and poet. They are all dead now and their executor, Francis Sitwell, Sacheverell's son, has given permission for her letters to family to be published.

Most letters in this volume are at the Harry Ransom Research Centre in Texas. Mr Ransom's oil money has purchased swathes of Britain's literary heritage. Documents are kept in sub-zero conditions to prolong life. Visiting readers are vetted; special gloves supplied.

No corresponding discipline has been given to packaging this volume. A rogue quotation mark in the first paragraph points to hard work for the reader. The editor, Richard Greene, a Canadian academic, was an archivist for Edith Sitwell's literary estate. He has sifted thousands of letters. His choice is informed and wide ranging. Dramas are buried here, but effort is needed to unearth them.

Concepts and events – generosity, naivety, love, money, fame, sickness – have to be mined. Notes are crammed as end pages and I got tired of rifling back and forth. Companion volumes are needed to make contextual sense: Osbert Sitwell's memoir, *Left Hand, Right Hand!* and Victoria Glendinning's biography, *A Unicorn Among Lions*.

It is a pity that there are no pictures. Edith's Elizabethan stature, with beringed hands and turbaned head, matched the grandness of Renishaw



Edith Sitwell: painted by Pavel Tchelitchev to resemble 'a dismal dog'

BRIDGEMAN - ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

## Behind the façade

and belied her vulnerability. Cecil Beaton's photographs captured her. There are letters to him of praise and affection. The Russian painter Pavel Tchelitchev, with whom she fell in love, did a portrait which made her look like a dismal dog. Most of his letters are omitted. They met at a lunch given by Gertrude Stein and Alice B Toklas in 1927. Edith was 40; Tchelitchev, 29. Their correspondence is sealed at the Yale University Library until 2000. Alice B Toklas said "Edith will go over for the breaking of the seals".

A few letters have escaped this embargo. They show Edith's naivety and hurt. She admired his paintings, gave him money, encouraged others to buy his work. But Tchelitchev – in love with a pianist, Alan Tanner – attacked her as an artist, told her he wanted to slap her face,

have her kneel at his feet. "Russians only really like idiots, prostitutes and dress-makers," she wrote.

Edith thought herself the *doyenne* of modernism. Her audience she called "small and discerning" and she was hurt by criticism. Not all tolerated her incantatory style. A diary entry of Una Troubridge, Radclyffe Hall's partner, in 1924 was of "a bedlam afternoon with Edith Sitwell shouting down a megaphone" at the Poetry Society. At a hostile reception, Edith felt like a vast bird that had blundered into a room, hitting its head on the ceiling. She called critics of Gertrude Stein's "hermetic" writing "vulgar little clothes moths". Her letters to Stein are full of praise.

She was effusive to women writers whose work she enjoyed. On reading *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, she wrote to

Carson McCullers: "What a great poet's mind and eye and senses you have." About a poem by HD (Hilda Doolittle) she wrote, "Yours is the supreme apple tree, the flowering apple". And she was warm with gratitude to HD's wealthy lover, Bryher (Winifred Ellerman).

She sent letters about whatever was on her mind. To the editor of the *Daily Mail* she railed at the "unceasing barking of dogs" at night. To Stanley Kauffman, editor of Ballantine Books, she gave convoluted apology for cutting him off when he phoned; she thought he was a journalist hounding her about giving a lunch party for Marilyn Monroe. And days before she died, the *Times Literary Supplement* published her outburst about cruelty to ponies in Belgian slaughter houses. These letters range wide, pointers to a creative, eccentric, generous life.

## Painting pictures on land and sea

Carol Rumens enjoys some poetic notes from the margins

*Salt Water* by Andrew Motion, Faber, £7.99, *A Painted Field* by Robin Robertson, Picador, £5.99

Although both authors were born in the early-to-mid 1950s, these two poetry collections spring from widely different positions on the career-graph. Robin Robertson's book is his first, and if it seems a belated debut for a literary professional, perhaps Robertson's own experience as a publisher has taught him the virtue of caution. Not surprisingly, the poems are carefully crafted, but the manner is tense and alert, his technique never slick.

Andrew Motion, on the other hand, seems at his most relaxed in this, his eighth collection. The poet seems enough at ease with himself and the limits of his genre to enjoy the sense of mastery. His earliest influences were the so-called war poets: Rupert Brooke, Wilfred Owen, Edward Thomas. And sometimes it has seemed that Motion's own quest has been to shape himself into their late-20th century equivalent – an English war-poet without a war, but with access to plentiful imagery of death and disaster, as well as a richer vein of painful personal memories.

Motion's desire to push poetry beyond the lyric boundaries he inhabited comfortably in his first book, *The Pleasure Steamers*, led him to the extended narrative sequence, a genre he has virtually made his own. But sometimes the writing itself could become something of a battlefield. The sequence "Joe Soap", for instance, which dominated his last collection, combined elements of the murder-mystery and war-story with excursions into a kind of magic realism.

Motion has worked hard to make prose and poetry pull together, perhaps wishing to synthesise his varied talents – as poet, novelist and biographer. The experiments have never been less than interesting, but there's a lot to recommend in *Salt Water's* rediscovery of more concentrated narrative and lyric forms. In spite of the odd Larkin-esque splash of acid petulance, the overriding impression is of poems able to be "surprised by joy" (sometimes in animal form) and to celebrate imaginative fecundity: "Retriever-dog winds in a clear track/raced forwards and backward laying a new idea at his feet/again and again. ("Goethe in the Park")

Even with his "negative capability" refreshed, Motion has not abandoned all major construction work. Thematically linked by water, his three sequences are like a sea on which the individual poems bob as confidently as well-made boats. "Fresh

Water" and "Salt Water" are composed entirely in verse, which may be why they are more fluent, brisk and compact than usual. "Sailing to Italy" is largely in prose (though the occasional poem sends up a fragile shout) and, again, there's the pleasant sense of a medium allowed to do what it does best.

Motion sailed as a passenger on the same route that took the dying Keats to Rome. Perhaps there's something faintly stunt-ish about the whole idea: a biographer shouldn't need to live part of his subject's life. Mystical hints that the author is seeking to "meet" Keats are a shade tiresome. But overall, this is a travesty with the vividness of the best kind of letter-writing (such as Keats's own). It immerses us in physical reality, showing us the ropes and oarskins and winches, the gales and engine-failure, as well as psychological effects – particularly the tantalising failure (typical of those whose art is to stay the moment) to inhabit the happiness of the present.

Robin Robertson gives an occasional nod towards Heaney ("Enter the tone of French and rampart") and to Tom Paulin ("Sunlight glints like mica schist in granite"). But the writer to whom he seems closest, sharing something of the tough-lyric mode and lively visual imagination, is Norman MacCaig. Even when working in a largish structure – such as his Ovid imitation "The Flaying of Marsyas" – he achieves narrative progress mostly by cutting from image to image. The effect is of a disquietingly obsessive, jackal-like circling of the flayed torso – a cinematic detachment as various metaphors are tried like different camera angles.

Robertson uses a collage technique in his sequence "Camera Obscura", which tells the tragic story of the Edinburgh photographer and failed painter, David Octavius Hill. It inter-cuts imagined diary and letter extracts with snippets of folk-song, haiku-like *aperçus*, love-poems (haunting, if a little unfocused) and sharp-eyed documentary that finds humour as well as dolor in

Edinburgh now: "The Japanese tourist places his camera on a post/back away, and stands smiling vigorously. The small machine flashes: clicks. I hear the shutter's granular slither as a spade in wet soil, while he would hear *sha-shin*." As these lines suggest, Robertson has an ear as good as his eye. There is rich consonantal and alliterative music to be heard throughout *A Painted Field*. While not uninterested in matters of national identity, as the sequence reveals, Robertson registers his own identity most tellingly through his poems' aural patterning.

His poems are not cries from margins – if we mean regional margins – and only occasionally satirical (see "Sunny Memories"). But the fact that Robertson is not writing in the "deafening silence" (which obtained for MacCaig's generation) (the phrase was used by Ian Crichton Smith, as recently as 1988) has no doubt helped secure the work's unusual poise, the courage of its personal obsessions.

Andrew Motion sailed as a passenger on the same route that took the dying Keats to Rome

## Voluptuary and pervert dies the death of a dog



Evelyn Nesbit: 'seduced'

PHOTOGRAPH CORBIS-BETTMANN/UP

Peter Parker is intrigued by a scandalous family history

*The Architect of Desire* by Suzannah Lessard, Weidenfeld, £18.99

Suzannah Lessard's great-grandfather, Stanford White, was the most flamboyant partner of McKim, Mead and White, architects to the plutocracy during New York's "Gilded Age". A figure of boundless energy and appetites, White lived in enormous style and ran up even more enormous debts. By 1906 his health and finances were equally depleted, and although only 53, he would probably have died soon of natural causes had not a millionaire called Harry K Thaw shot him dead at Madison Square Garden, a building White designed. Thaw announced he was avenging his wife, a young woman called Evelyn Nesbit who as a 16-year-old had been drugged and seduced by the architect. *Vanity Fair* reported the case under the headline: "Stanford White, Voluptuary and Pervert, Dies the Death of a Dog".

Lessard grew up on the family estate designed by White on Long Island, so that although his name was rarely mentioned his presence was always felt. "In the beautiful environment of the family past," she writes, "there was a magnificent figure who had gone out of control in a way destructive to those on his course – including his family – and ultimately to himself. Behind my memories of a blissful childhood in a beautiful place, there were also destructive forces that were blind and out of control, but unacknowledged. Yet to this inner truth and all its ramifications I had no access. This was the great role of family history to me."

This is family history as catharsis. Lessard has a fascinating story to tell, and at times she does this with great skill, notably in the chapter about "The Astor Orphans", an

engagingly batty clutch of aunts and uncles. If the whole book had been written with this stylish clarity it would deserve the accolades heaped upon it in America, but a sentence beginning "When I became literary..." unwittingly signals what has gone wrong.

What becoming literary means is demonstrated by the subsequent passage, in which Lessard describes the moment in her thirties when she suddenly became aware of her beloved grandmother's mortality: "I began to harvest her presence as though it were a field of flax, and I were gathering it into baskets, retting it, combing it, spinning it, and weaving it, until I felt I had something I could hold, and take away with me, like the pillow that I was embroidering. There was safety for me within the atmosphere of serene crashing. I found grounding in that dizzying environment of orbiting things: it was safe, but it wasn't, but it was. But it was." Lessard frequently elaborates images and ideas into this sort of incantatory muzziness.

Her ingenious notion of

relating Stanford White's architecture to his moral character is similarly spoiled by overemphasis. His remodelling of a sham Norman castle involved extensive use of "lush pink marble", a material of which Lessard became uncomfortably aware when she attended the Catholic woman's college which subsequently occupied the building. The marble "embarrassed" the students, she claims, "because it was so unrestrainedly sensual, so soft-seeming, with an alternately swirling and mottled grain". The "voluptuary pink" of this "quasi-bordello environment" may have seemed inappropriate for nuns, but then White had designed it not for a religious order but a newspaper editor.

Lessard suggests that White's buildings "seduce", "cnsnare", are "powerfully sensual": "Behind the aesthetic sophistication of a Stanford White interior is the blindly voracious, irresponsible force, both personal and that of a whole class, a whole nation out of control." You could equally well stand inside one of his buildings

and primarily be aware of order and proportion. It depends what you are looking for.

Lessard reveals that she was repeatedly fondled by an uncle and that she and her sisters were molested by her father, while another family member was raped by a cousin during a party. She contends that this incidence of sexual irregularity is somehow related to Stanford White's compulsive preying on under-age women. But her father, after all, was not a White descendant, but had married into the family.

The book ends with an unusual "moment of grace", when the family silence is breached during what amounts to a group-therapy session at which Lessard and her sisters confront the past and achieve adulthood.

*Altabella* magazine, to which the author is a contributing editor, said of this book that it is "so crushingly elegant that the act of reading was like running your cheek across a velvet nap". Anyone who recognises a distinction between literature and a party-frock will be less easily impressed.

'A gripping saga of great passion ... sustained, impassioned and uplifting'

THE TIMES



His bestselling novel of the Dark Ages

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## Paperbacks



By Christopher Hirst

**Writing Home** by Alan Bennett (Faber, £6.99) Now in a nice, chunky format, with a cheerful, crayoned self-portrait on the cover, this edition of Bennett's best-seller has been expanded to include diary selections from 1991 to 1995 and an introduction to *The Madness of George III*. Bennett describes the crumbling of his quills about historical inaccuracy in the film script. "By the third draft I would have taken the King to Blackpool if I had thought it would have helped". The book stands up wonderfully well – always perceptive, often very funny, occasionally shocking. As Mr B remarks of Russell Hart: "He had learned ... there was nothing that could not be said and no one in whom one could not say it." Reading Bennett's bits and bobs is a pure joy.

**Real China** by John Gittings (Pocket Books, £7.99) Despite its sensational sub-title, "From Cannibalism to Karaoke", this is an insightful and learned survey of "Middle China" – the backwaters scarcely touched by Deng's economic revolution. In the "heavily disadvantaged" Guangxi province, Gittings alleges that an outbreak of cannibalism took place during the Cultural Revolution prompted both by revenge and a belief in "the therapeutic value of certain parts of the human body".

On the karaoke side, he reveals that 30 old songs praising Mao have recently been re-released and "set to a disco beat". Dismissing Deng's ambition to transform Middle China into a mainland Hong Kong, Gittings bleakly predicts

that this region is likely to become another Third World country "on a vastly larger scale".

**The Lost Victory** by Correlli Barnett (Pan, £8.99) This is history with a passion. The case which Barnett makes against the 1945 Labour administration is hard to answer. He claims that in refusing to face up to Britain's diminished status, the Attlee cabinet frittered away the fruits of victory. Despite our "impoverished, obsolescent" economy, the government's strategy was "to persist in the ruinous make-believe that the UK was a first-rate world power and at the same time pursue the dream of New Jerusalem". This resulted in a leeching-away of the funds desperately needed for modernising industry. Though Barnett's polemic is flawed – the liberalism he condemns also produced postwar Germany's economic miracle – this furious book is essential reading.

**Mukiwa** by Peter Godwin (Picador, £7.99) In this prize-winning memoir, Godwin describes growing up in Rhodesia (Mukiwa means "white man" in Shona) with the vividness of a great novelist. Reading it is like being there. When very young in the early Sixties, he saw at first hand the results of the guerrilla campaign. (A doctor's son, he had the task of spraying flies during the post-mortems.) At the time, this merely added interest to the life of a juvenile colonial. Godwin has an astonishing gift for recall, from school fights to the killing of a cobra. Later, the mood darkens. Alone with Ian Smith, he contemplates assassination. His sister is accidentally killed by troops. He encounters the atrocity of civil war. Despite the horror, this remains a powerful account of both childhood and Africa.

## Audiobooks



The best audiobooks need an author and reader both suited to the medium, but occasionally the quality of one can compensate for the other's failings. The to-ing and fro-ing in time of Peter Ackroyd's *Hawksmoor* (HarperCollins, 3hrs, £8.99) are hard to hold, and the language sounds more

overwrought than on the page. But Derek Jacobi romps through the roccoco phrasing with such competence that it's hard to stop listening to this tale of a modern detective's perception of a 17th-century architect's devilry.

Nick Hornby's demotic style is, by contrast, easy on the ear. But whoever got Hornby to read *Fever Pitch* (HarperCollins, 3hrs, £8.99) almost scored an own goal: his voice is amateurish and uneven. Persevere. He gains in confidence, and the book explores male obsession just as well as *High Fidelity*.

Christina Hardyment



Kate Atkinson: talking liberties with fictional method

PHOTOGRAPH BY OULIO SAGGIN

## Black forest gâteau

Penelope Lively enters a woodland time-warp

**Human Croquet** by Kate Atkinson, Doubleday, £15.99

The opening of Kate Atkinson's first novel, *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*, echoed Tristram Shandy. Her second begins "Call me Isobel ...". Such devices can be seen aschutzpah or intertextuality, according to taste. My own feeling was – why shouldn't she? Intertextual references litter the pages of this vivid and intriguing novel – to Shakespeare especially. This can be a heavy-handed method – a right sinner, indeed – but not here. Kate Atkinson's touch is deft, and the story fits and crackles along with so many twists and turns that it is well able to carry the freight of Shakespearean allusion and the airy references to higher physics which are integral to the content.

This is a novel about time. The space-time continuum, worm-holes in space, wrinkles in time – all those unimaginable concepts that lend themselves so nicely to fictional exploration. The past in the present is the theme here: hardly a new one, but seldom done with more panache or originality.

As in *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*, the central matter is the dire family secret which preys upon childhood. Isobel and her brother Charles are mewed up in Arden, the scullery suburban home in which they are reared by their dire aunt Vinny after the apparent death of their father and disappearance of the mother Eliza, for whom they pathetically yearn.

What happened to Eliza – the how and the why – are the threads which weave in and out of a craftily constructed narrative that takes every possible liberty with sequential tale-telling. The novel's structure reflects the slippery nature of time. Hints and clues of what will happen, or may have happened, are cunningly scattered – unobtrusive at the moment but rearing their heads in retrospect. A broken-heeled shoe found by the children in dreadful aunt Vinny's wardrobe seems to have been Eliza's and strikes a sinister chord; Charles's red hair reflects neither parent; and the adults flinch at certain references which ring alarm bells in the reader's head, but to which the children are oblivious.

The suburb in which Arden stands is built on the site of ancient woodland, which itself descends from the primeval forest. The streets are named after trees and the forest theme pervades the book. The crucial scene after which Eliza is seen no more takes place during a family picnic in nearby Boscombe Wood, all that is left of the ancient woodland. And the family itself is the surviving stock of the Fairfaxes, who built their Elizabethan manor in the woods and whose fortunes subsequently declined to the proprietorship of the high-street grocery. This sounds like a swerve into Mills & Boon territory. Never fear – if so, it is all a part of the deliberate and larky

referential style. At one point, Isobel turns into a tree when pursued by a posse of drunken yobs. Or she may have done – because Isobel is an unreliable witness, and no wonder, given her traumatic youth. She finds herself periodically swept into time-warps and walks into a vanished inn or contemplates a former incarnation of her aunt in a bedroom at Arden. She is caught up in a re-running of a single day in which events turn out differently each time, a motif that raises the fashionable concept of alternative universes. Have I stepped into the same river twice? she wonders – overtaken again by intertextuality.

Isobel's is the narrative voice – an acerbic, knowing voice, except that what she doesn't know is the awful truth of adult deceit. But there is also a detached voice which fills us in on events about which Isobel cannot know. Plenty of liberties are taken with fictional method. On the whole it works, except for a chunk of medieval fantasy at the end. As a participant character Isobel rather fades into the background. Kate Atkinson is excellent at subsidiary figures, ranging from devastating vignettes to the Greek chorus of the fearful Baxter family next door, where wife-hatting and incest flourish. The strength of this clever, adventurous novel lies in its careful meshing of a compelling story with excursions into fantasy, experiment and outrageous grand guignol. It's something of a *tour de force*.



Pick of the week  
*Faithless* by John L. Williams

narrator is called Doug Down: he is haunted by a paranoid woman calling herself Lucia de Londres and his best mate (whose ex-girlfriend he eventually shags) is a *soi-disant* comedian called Andy Cipolin. The ex-girlfriend herself is Annis, which turns out to be a nickname derived from her favourite sexual practice. No prizes for guessing what that is (in Amis's *London Fields*, Nicola Six was similarly inclined). "Most girls like it," Annis tells Doug, "though they prefer not to admit it."

John McKenzie's *Are You Boys Cyclists?* (Serpent's Tail, £8.99) is more critical of male fantasies: which is not to say they're not on offer. "Don't worry," Matt, the narrator, reassures the reader: "This book isn't going to miss being part of the wank

industry if I can help it." It is, you'll gather, a self-referential book, mixing a narrative about boxing, drugs, unemployment and sex in the Edinburgh of 1977 with musings on writing and reading books. Matt isn't far wrong when he describes it as "a cross between Charles Bukowski, Henry Miller, Jeanette Winterson and Kurt Vonnegut".

The climax arrives with twin orgies of violence and sex – intercut descriptions of a boxing match and a marathon sex session with Matt's best mate's ex, culminating in, um, a trip to the moon. It's hard to say if this is intended as male wish-fulfilment, or some sort of criticism. I'm not sure, either, whether this book is genuinely joyless and solipsistic or just pretending.

Mark Blackaby's *Look What They've Done to the Blues* (Gollancz, £9.99) is straightforward wish-fulfilment: the hero, Charlie (a professional thug who's been to university), combines a middle-class frame of reference with working-class credibility. He is good-looking, tough, clever, irresistible to women and destined to be hugely rich, if he can collect the proceeds from an old job – a task that provides the vestigial plot. Even with these advantages, he contrives to be one of life's losers (thankfully, or the book would be unbearably smug). It's his ex who gets shagged by his best mate, and he doesn't get the ultimate sexual treat but merely watches a video of somebody else doing it. Hardly elevating, but certainly entertaining. That's how boys like it.

## Amis is as good as a smile

Kevin should never have been felled by that coffee table, says Hugo Barnacle

Stuff by Joseph Connolly, Faber, £14.99

It always takes more effort to get something started than to keep it moving, whether it's a novel or a wheelbarrow. But Joseph Connolly tries a fraction too hard with the opening of *Stuff*: "Emily hit Kevin with a coffee table – just upped and did it. And was she now content with leaving the man writhing around on the ground (his eyes quite dulled yet lit with surprise, all overlaid with a thick and dripping, big brown slice of fear)?"

There is no telling what Connolly means by this. In what conceivable sense does fear correspond to fried bread or anything else that comes in dripping slices, brown or otherwise? A further slight problem is that we soon learn that Emily, an interior designer, keeps all her tables covered in knick-knacks whose disarrangement she cannot tolerate. So she wouldn't swing the coffee table at her husband even if she had the strength which, not being a giantess, she clearly can't have. Perhaps we should allow it as comic exaggeration.

Connolly's style sorts itself out after that. *Stuff* is his third comic novel in as many years and he is becoming highly accomplished. The black farce of the storyline recalls Tom Sharpe, the indignant narration recalls Kingsley Amis. In fact, Connolly reproduces some of Amis's favourite mannerisms more or less exactly.

Raymond, whose son is going out with Kevin and Emily's daughter, drops by. "Kevin had gone to the lavatory, now. He had actually said, much to Raymond's wondering disbelief, that the time had come for a man to do what a man had to do. No arch or roguish smile, no John Wayne accent, not even the merest trace of an incipient inverted comma: just said it – said it as if no one in the world had ever said it before." This unflinching indulgence in stereotypical behaviour is a key trait of the characters Amis labelled "stooges". The difference is that Amis would probably have gone for the John Wayne accent to pile on the annoyance. He hated his stooges, whereas poor old useless Kevin is, oddly enough, quite a sympathetic character.

But the annoyance soon builds up all right. Emily's decor starts to off. Raymond seethes at the swagged curtains, the table lamps "made from ginger jars that

had never seen ginger, matey", the dummy obelisk and the bowl of silver-wrapped dragees you mustn't eat. Amis always liked using pretentious and fiddly ornaments of costume or furnishing to get his characters and readers into a lather of helpless fury.

By the time Raymond's son and Emily's daughter appear, giggling at nothing in a deeply irritating way while Kevin utters *non-sequiturs* and Emily "acid-sweetly" threatens more domestic violence, Raymond is approaching true Amisian apoplexy. He "just turned away before all the blood in his body coursed up into his neck and blasted right out of his nostrils". Raymond even thinks, "If I had a Bren gun handy ...". In similar vein, Kevin later thinks of his wife as "Obergruppenführer Emily". Amis was inordinately fond of these old-time military allusions, but Raymond and Kevin, still in their forties, are a bit too young for them. And Raymond's comment on women ("I mean, what – maybe they're all born a bit doolally and as the years progress – through periods of instability and paranoia they all end up as terminally deranged") comes of obvious ancestry.

Imitative as it is, the book has enough energy to take on a life of its own and is often laugh-out-loud funny. Kevin's mortal terror of everyday situations, like talking to people or going into restaurants, is very well handled. The phrasemaking is apt and unshowy. The Sharpeish plot, a calculatedly absurd round of adultery, murder, insanity, businesses going bust and houses burning down, creates an exhilarating hysteria. Although, at 330 pages, it goes on too long. *Stuff* is better than Sharpe's own current work, and maybe better than Amis's final novels too.

There is a useful core of seriousness to the whole thing. The kids' incessant giggling, for instance, turns out to be for a reason quite opposite to the sexual smugness you first assume: a problem they won't discuss has left them permanently embarrassed with each other. Many of the characters who start off as caricatures or monsters acquire unexpected depth, while the ones who appear most normal to begin with sometimes prove to be howling nutters – but this never falls into a predictable pattern, so the story keeps its edge, its heightened atmosphere and its weird conviction.

## Independent choice: literature for lads

By Robert Hanks

For a while, it looked as though masculinity was in crisis – confused, embarrassed, uncertain what it wanted. But to judge by the latest crop of paperback-original novels, all that has changed. Now men have sorted out what they want, and their list of demands turns out to be surprisingly easy to fill: they're not interested in successful careers or steady girlfriends (none of the first-person narrators in these books has either) so long as they can have alcohol, drugs, punk rock, a modicum of violence and occasional sex with their best mate's ex-girlfriend.

It helps, too, if the young lady – how shall we put this? – is prepared to motor in reverse gear. To put it plainly: most of these books share the conviction that anal intercourse (with a woman – all these men are unequivocally hetero) is the greatest treat a boy can have.

Perhaps we should start by mentioning the exception to this rule: John L. Williams's *Faithless* (Serpent's Tail, £8.99). Williams is best known as an advocate of hard-boiled US crime fiction, so I half-expected his first novel to be a homegrown version. Mercifully, *Faithless* is decidedly British, in its weary, self-deprecating tone and its faithfully observed setting – London in the early Eighties.

The narrator, Jeff, a one-time aspiring rock musician, gets involved in a misguided attempt to blackmail a former mate who is now a big star. It all goes horribly wrong, and he ends up in trouble with far greedier

and more vicious criminals. (The analogy with Thatcherism is blatant but not over-schematic.)

True, the book does have its anal side. Jeff works in a record-shop it's presumably this, and the action in the vicinity of Highbury, that the blurb-writer had in mind when comparing Williams to Nick Hornby, which provides the excuse for some tedious rock trivia. The particularity of Williams's London settings and his unaffectedly witty prose are compensations. They look especially attractive next to the hugely affected, would-be witty prose of Charles Kennedy Scott's *Low Alcohol* (Headline Review, £8.99).

It's worth quoting a paragraph from Scott: "So where am I going? Yes, you may well ask: Where am I going? And, if you see me walking the streets with my aimless face, my off-centre hairstyle, my worn clothes and my shiny new boots, you may well wonder: where is he going?"

Well, he'd have to be going somewhere pretty bloody interesting to justify that blather. Sadly, despite some nicely turned moments of farce, *Low Alcohol* is a dull and profoundly annoying satirical fantasy in the manner of Martin Amis. Full of urban angst, millennial portents and significant names. Scott's imagination falls between the stools of merciless precision and bludgeoning savagery.

The names, for example, are neither overtly funny (remember Caduta Massi in Amis's *Money*?) nor blatantly meaningful (as in John Self). So our apathetic, self-pitying



## Spliced girls

Maya Jaggi explores conflicting desires in new Amerindian literature

*Arranged Marriage and The Mistress of Spices* by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Black Swan, £6.99, and Doubleday, £12.99

As a new generation of British Asian writers – including Hanif Kureishi, Meera Syal and Bidisha – charts "inbetweenness", there is a parallel burgeoning across the Atlantic. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is among a growing number of young American authors of Indian descent (such as Anjana Appachana, Indira Ganesan, Zia Jaffrey and Ameena Meer) who explore the meeting of two worlds through a perspective that derives from both.

*Arranged Marriage* won the American Book Award in 1995. Its short stories chart territory carved out in the fiction of Bharati Mukherjee (also Calcutta-born and California-based): the "immigrant dream" as it rubs against US reality; the fear and exhilaration as boundaries erode and traditions crumble; the lure and losses of rule-breaking. Despite a title that threatens uniformity, the arranged marriages are merely emblems of stricture. The focus is on women; the freedoms and illicit desires that a new life in "Amreeka" can stir in those shackled by inherited roles. Characters range from the traditional to the cosmopolitan, from the incipiently rebellious

to those "Indian yet not Indian" creatures mocked on the subcontinent as "ABCDes" ("American-born Confused Desis"). As America tempts – "the neon Budweiser emblem winking on and off like a risky invitation" – a divorced woman quits spice-grinding for fast-food take-outs, a bride ditches saris to secrete her jeans from policing in-laws, and a daughter rehearses the words to tell a distant mother of a white boyfriend. Transplanted couples' expectations collide, as men revert to the "prehistoric values" a mother warns her US-raised daughter against.

Myths of womanhood control, but can sometimes liberate. In "The Maid Servant's Story", a woman views an aunt's tale as a warning: "A preview of my own life which I thought I had fashioned so cleverly, so differently from my mother's, but which is only a repetition, in a different raga, of her tragic song. Perhaps it is like this for all daughters, doomed to choose for ourselves, over and over, the men who have destroyed our mothers."

Divakaruni is no apologist for the American dream, eyeing the "Paki-hashing" of America's own "dobusters" (after the red hand on a married woman's forehead) and fatal muggings in the 7-Eleven. Resisting facile binaries of East versus West, she unpicks with irony her characters' mutual illusions and envies.

The modest realism of *Arranged Marriage* makes the failure of *The Mistress of Spices* all the more puzzling. In the novel, an old, village-born woman, once kidnapped by pirates, and taught the secrets of spice-magic on a tropical island, runs a store in Oakland, California. Chatting to her wares ("Spices, what does this mean?"), Nayanara, or "star seed", divines migrants' ills and desires: "Green cards, promotions, girls with lousy eyes." Since her powers rest on co-liberty, when she falls for a young Amerindian, does herself with a youth elixer and beds him, the spices wreak revenge via the San Andreas fault. "Spices, I caused it," she moans, as the earth moves.

This drive is threaded with "real" lives: Haroun, a servant turned taxi driver; Ahuja, a battered wife; Jagjit, a bullied schoolboy. None rises above cliché as the author attempts a lofty compassion to the "lost brown faces": "Garment factories smelling of starch and sweat and immigration raids, women handcuffed and piled crying into vans ..."

The compulsion to address a white American reader, latent in the stories, becomes blatant as the novel strives to explain. But pandering with fake folklore to New Age mysticism leaves its characters exoticised and diminished.



# travel & outdoors

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## Born to be wild

The Omo valley in Ethiopia could be the last wilderness in Africa. By Caroline Seed

**"Y**ou like Utopia?" The first and most enduring impression of Ethiopia is an endless series of friendly faces cheerfully mispronouncing their country's name. Some of these faces belong to hand-somely attired Orthodox priests, some to white-robed pilgrims, some to shepherd boys, some to tall, beautiful women with beads in their hair. But in the Omo valley, a remote area in the far south west near the Kenyan and Sudanese borders, the people have only recently become aware that such a thing as Ethiopia exists, and they ask a different question.

"You have razor blades?" I eyed the ridged network of gash scars decorating their bodies and flapped a hand rather urgently to our guide, Alex, who ambled over with a grin. As usual he was prepared for anything, and handed me a bag bulging with strings of brightly coloured beads: much better for the skin, and the Karo people loved them. We were instant hits. Faces lit with humour, the Karo draped the beads around their wrists and necks and started to prod and poke us gently.

The bright-eyed and endlessly curious Karo are one of the most threatened tribes of the lower Omo. They number fewer than 1,000, and a single epidemic could obliterate them; but more worrying are other tribes in the area, who are not always friends. The Mursi are per-

manently at war with the Hamar, the Hamar with their cousins the Karo; and the Buni fight both the Karo and the Surma whenever they can. The women scarify their chests to beautify themselves, but the men do so to indicate their having killed an enemy or a dangerous animal.

Few areas remain in Africa that can be described as true wilderness, but the valley of the wide, smooth-flowing Omo River is a good candidate - a lost world, rendered almost uninhabitable by the tsetse fly. Here spectacular landscapes are unblemished by man, and huge herds of eland and buffalo roam across the unspoiled savanna grassland, along with giraffe, elephant, zebra, lion and leopard. Unused to tourists, the animals are wild and shy, but despite having been warned that game was far less visible than in other East African countries, we were not disappointed.

Alex, a professional hunter, has an infectious enthusiasm for the country as well as an impressive knowledge of its wildlife, and cheerfully woke us for each morning's safari at 5am. Spotting wildlife in the grey light of dawn was extremely difficult. Alex patiently pointed to a clump of dry, spindly bushes in the distance. Yawning, I picked up my binoculars to see the two enormous brown eyes of a gerenuk - a slim antelope - staring straight at me. Next he waved at a dark smudge on the horizon, which turned into a massive herd of tiang - related to wildebeest - browsing peacefully.

Gradually, as I became more aware of what to look for, curved sticks poking into the skyline materialised into oryx, rocks into baboon, and hushes into kudu, waterbuck, oribi and hartebeest. The bird life was magnificent: we saw secretary birds, bustards and great flocks of carmine bee-eaters as well as an abundance of vultures and birds of prey. By mid-morning the game would have vanished, to find shelter from the broiling heat, and we would return to camp.

The Omo camp is currently the only permanent one in the area, and is set on the banks of the river, pitched in the shade of tall trees occasionally inhabited by a colony of colobus monkeys. Billed as a luxury camp, it has all the required trappings: twin beds, flush lavatories, pedestal basins and hot showers, housed beneath a dozen neatly thatched roofs. This is usually a hunting camp, but the owner is happy to accommodate tourists on photographic and walking trips. It is possible to hire a vehicle and driver and travel independently, but the roads are rough and an experienced mechanic and a supply of



spare parts are a must. We had three flat tyres and needed to change our fuel filter twice during our two-day drive back to Addis Ababa.

Safaris in the early evening are perhaps the most idyllic. The air is warm and soft as velvet, the sky a hazy lavender. Standing high on the back of our jeep, we bounced across the baked brown grasses, negotiating herds of gazelle and tiang.

As night drew in, Degana, our tracker, scanned around the vehicle with a spotlight. Suddenly another world took shape: the day shift of antelope was transposed to the night shift of predators. Our first excitement was spying a genet cat, a miniature leopard with a tail as thick as a man's wrist; then a civet cat darted behind some acacia trees. Fresh hyena tracks padded down the dusty track and African barn owls swooped overhead. More sinister were the dozens of red eyes that glimmered malevolently along the softly silted banks of the Omo, and after counting 18 crocodiles opposite our camp I wondered about the group of Italian tourists (the only other tourists we saw) we'd spotted earlier swimming in the river.

The most vivid memory is the sighting of my first leopard. At 4am, we were huddled shivering in the jeep, the air chill, when Degana

hissed excitedly: "Leopard, leopard, leopard." It was pitch dark and he swung the lamp to the right as Alex stamped on the brakes. Suddenly a liquid silk form of black and gold froze in its tracks, just yards away. The leopard's eyes stared at us, stunned, captured by Degana's lamp for perhaps 10 sec-

**‘The evening air is warm and soft as velvet, the sky a hazy lavender’**

onds, and then the powerful muscles flexed and he sprang into the blackness.

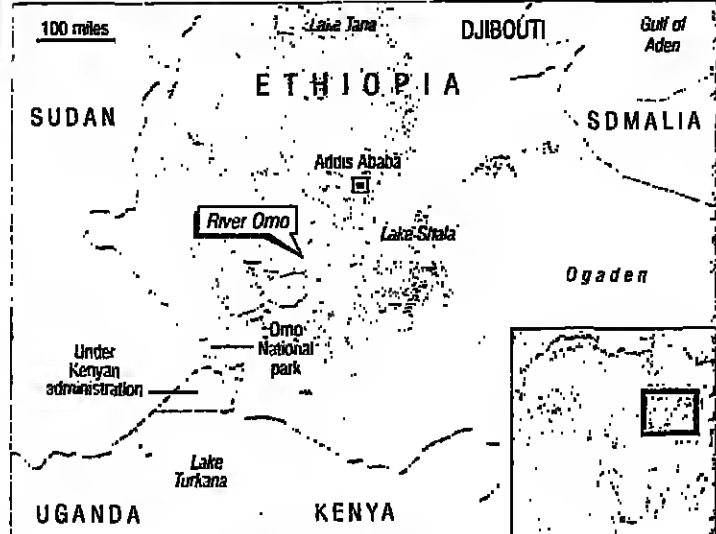
We'd risen earlier than usual in order to visit the Mursi tribe, who are renowned for their practice of inserting large, circular clay plates behind the lower lips of their women. These are purely symbolic, and the size of the lip plate determines the size of the bride price. A large lip plate, for example, will bring in 50 head of cattle. And 49 cattle can buy seven Kalashnikov

rifles, the most significant currency of all in this part of the world.

It was a six-hour bone-rattling drive to the nearest Mursi village, punctuated briefly by stops to view buffalo, warthog and lesser kudu. There were ample antelope but giraffe were scarce: not only are they easier to kill than other game, but the Mursi relish their meat. On the edge of the Mago National Park we spotted the bleached remains of a dead elephant, picked so clean that it appeared to have been there for a decade, not just a month. The Mursi, Alex told us, were partial to elephant meat, too.

Sweat-drenched and covered in insect bites, we finally arrived at a clutch of thatched huts shimmering beneath the searing midday sun. Two tall warriors stood on the horizon with their spears, but otherwise all was still, silent. Then, the instant our jeep entered the village compound, the silence gave way to a deafening uproar.

Swarms of people erupted out of the huts and raced for us, shouting



Still are warriors: the Karo, Mursi and Hamar tribes are permanently at war with each other. The clay lip plate worn by Mursi women, top, determines the bride's price: a large lip plate equates to 50 head of cattle - enough for seven Kalashnikov rifles, the real currency of the area

When Alex stanced the jeep's engine I was beside him before you could say "10 birr". Because no matter how statuesque the women, how endearing the children, one hour of the Mursi was quite enough.

As we roared off, we passed a land cruiser full of Americans coming the other way. I was surprised to learn that, on average, three vehicles visit the Mursi each day, and that most tourists undertake the exhausting trip to the Omo valley purely to see the Mursi. I hoped they weren't going to be disappointed.

Ethiopian Airlines (0171-491 9119) flies five times a week from Heathrow to Addis Ababa. Through Travelways (0171-631 1540) a return ticket costs £561 including tax. Bridge The World (0171-911 0900) sells flights via Cairo on Egyptian for £454. British visitors can get a visa from the Ethiopian Embassy at 17 Princes Gate, London, SW7 1PZ (0171-589 7212). Trips to the Omo valley are run by Ethiopian Rift Valley Safaris, PO Box 3658 Addis Ababa (00 251 1 55 1127).



**"W**anted. Young, skinny, wiry fellows not over 18. Must be expert riders, willing to risk death daily. Orphans preferred. Wages \$25 per week."

This is how the new edition of *Work Your Way Around the World* begins. Fortunately the vacancies in question have long been filled - the advertisement was placed in 1860 by the Pony Express. The book's author, Susan Griffith, found the poster at a museum in Washington DC. But some of Britain's present-day travel enterprises are reporting alarming staff shortages.

Travel has never been among the world's best-paying industries, but a wage of £360 per month including board and lodging in a beautiful part of England or Wales seems a reasonably attractive prospect. Yet Edwina Edwards of the Youth Hostels Association says she is having trouble filling the 400 vacancies for assistant wardens this summer.

"We're getting plenty of



Simon Calder

people responding to our advertisements, but many of them see what the job's like and then don't bother to fill in the form. Worse still, some of the people who do apply and succeed at the interview turn down the job when it's offered."

Hang on, though - why do you need staff, anyway? What about the chores that hostellers are supposed to do? Apparently there has been some customer resistance to the old-established routine of an hour or two of housework. "Expectations have changed, and now we rely on voluntary help," says Ms Edwards - though in the last hostel I stayed in, the

**'The pay is £100 a week, which buys more in Ecuador than in Edale'**

resident warden didn't give the impression that there was a substantial element of choice on the subject of cleaning the kitchen.

It seems that southern hostels like me are proving less than co-operative in filling the vacancies.

"The north-south divide is really quite dramatic. We're well staffed in the north, but still have a number of vacancies south of the Peak District. Some people think that working in a youth hostel will be an extended holiday, and when they find it isn't they look for something else."

In my experience, a lot of them go abroad. Every backpackers' hostel from

San Diego to Sydney seems to have at least one British employee. But if cleaning up in Coalport or landing a job in Land's End appeals, call Edwina Edwards on 01426 939216. Should rafting the Zambezi or trekking across the Andes appeal more, then the person to talk to is Moira Welikanna (0171-370 6951). She can't get the staff these days, either.

Ms Welikanna handles recruitment for the adventure travel company Encounter, and is trying to recruit expedition leaders.

The pay is similar to the YHA - board and lodging plus about £100 a week, which buys more in Ecuador than it does in Edale. "The basic job description," says Ms Welikanna, "is simple: to take people safely and enjoyably from A to B". But you are on continuous duty 24 hours a day, responsible for 20 paying passengers - and may have to sort out anything from a clogged oil filter on the overland truck to armed insurrection (though not usually among the clients).

To help you cope, you get up to a year's training, half of it overseas.

The qualifications are straightforward: "You've got to be over 25, and able to think on your feet. Stay very cool and keep your sense of fun."

John Leivers has been an expedition leader for 10 years. "The best thing is the sense of achievement when you spend all day going up a mountain on some of the worst roads on earth, and finally discover wonderful volcanic scenery. The worst thing is when the truck breaks down half-way up."

The joys of working to travel are confirmed by some readers of the last edition of *Work Your Way Around the World*. Angie Copley writes from Caracas: "If I hadn't spent my last £10 on your book I'd never be where I am today. I started to realise that what I had previously thought was impossible, of travelling and working as well, could really happen."

It couldn't happen now: the price of the new eighth edition has risen to £10.99.

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something  
to declare

### Trouble spots

No-go nations around the world

Antarctica and the Americas share a common benefit: they are continents deemed safe by the Foreign Office, unlike Africa, Asia and Europe. The FO's Travel Advice Unit this week added Albania to its list of places that you are advised to avoid. The other nine blacklisted countries are: Afghanistan, Algeria, Burundi, Central African Republic, Iraq, Liberia, Somalia, Tajikistan and Western Sahara. Four other areas (not entire countries) are ruled out-of-bounds: Chechnya (Russia), Jammu and Kashmir (India) and Kivu (Zaire). The Travel Advice Unit (0171-238 4503) advises that the following should be avoided "unless on essential business": Angola, Bosnia, Rwanda, plus the remainder of Zaire and eastern Turkey.

### True or false:

Travel writing without pictures is like a kiss without a moustache?

Like the proverbial un-moustached kiss, asking any enthusiastic traveller to describe their trip can be as disappointing as eating strawberries without cream. They'll start on about magnificent scenery, gorgeous national costume, and oh! those jewel-like colours at sunset. But after a few minutes even the most verbose will be groping for the right words, and after a while they'll just say: "Stuff it, here are the photographs." Or they'll resort to comparison: "a bit like Scotland but warmer" for any uninhabited upland; "like Cornwall with coconuts" for most beaches further south than 50 degrees or, my favourite, "Benidorm with hilly hills" for any new resort.

Making the words paint the picture is a difficult skill; comparisons can be hell, hyperbole can annoy, clichés can tire. Show me another undiscovered paradise with crystal waters set in a land of contrasts with breathtaking scenery and I'll show you a travel writer whose next break needs to be a fortnight somewhere quiet, with a nice, limpid pool of imagination to dive into. As the producer of BBC Radio 4's *Breakaway* I'm always

Eleanor Garland

*'Breakaway', presented by Pete McCarthy, is on Radio 4 at 9.30am today and at 10.45pm on Sunday.*

### Bargain of the week

You can now travel free from Heathrow airport – but only by bus. The usual minimum adult fare on London's buses is 50 pence. But in and around Europe's busiest airport, it falls to zero thanks to "Freeflow Heathrow". This is BAA's campaign to increase the proportion of people who travel to Heathrow by public transport. The company picks up the bill for travellers on buses 105, 111, 140 and 285 between the central airport area and Bath

Road on the airport's northern perimeter. Beyond these limits you have to pay a fare.

The main benefit is for air travellers who find themselves delayed for a few hours. You can hop on one of the buses for a free ride to the only tourist attraction for miles, the Heathrow Visitor Centre. This interesting exhibition hall opens daily at 10am, closing at 5pm at weekends and 7pm the rest of the week. And, like the bus, it is free.

# The Scots ski into luxury

Gone are the austere days of the Scottish Ski Club. Now all they need north of the Border is a little more snow. By Stephen Wood



Chairway to heaven: when it's white it's wonderful, but one writer warns 'the great mistake lies in waiting for a good day, as it seldom happens'

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN WOOD

Early tomorrow morning, a Eurostar train leaves Waterloo for the French Alps. This will be a "preview" trip for the travel trade and the press; but next season Eurostar will run a regular service from London to Bourg St Maurice, from where it is a short trip to La Plagne, Les Arcs (linked to Bourg St Maurice by a funicular railway), Tignes and Val d'Isère. Unless you enjoy hanging around airports, enduring long coach transfers and polluting the atmosphere with fossil fuels, you'll look forward to that.

But it won't be the first direct train service from London to the ski slopes. Last week I caught the overnight Caledonian Sleeper from Euston to Fort William for a first, long-delayed skiing trip to Scotland. As the train rumbled up the West Coast main line, I lay in my bunk reading *Skiers*, Myrtle Simpson's long-out-of-print history of Scottish skiing. After a last look at Crewe – I fell asleep: when I next looked out it was from the single-track railway across Rannoch Moor on a bright Scottish morning. Simpson's book reinforces the

view that skiing in Scotland can sometimes be an "experience" rather than a pleasure. Even before the First World War, she reports, "skiing was becoming popular" [and] members of the Scottish Ski Club began to feel that their sport was degraded as a result. The committee therefore decided that applicants could qualify for membership only by completing a series of strenuous ski tours, covering 75 miles in all and involving a total of at least 12,000ft of ascents – with an 8lb back-pack, and without ski lifts. Expeditions in the Alps did not count, since obviously they were for softies: the "significant difference between people who ski happily in Scotland and those in the Alps," says Simpson, is that "Scottish skiers have an unlimited capacity to put their head down against a blizzard." She quotes one enthusiastic skier as saying that the weather in Scotland "is always indifferent to had, and the great mistake lies in waiting for a good day, as it seldom happens."

I waited the best part of three months for a good day, telephoning Scotland regularly from mid-December onwards; but my patience was rewarded with snow

and sunshine. And the weather wasn't the only thing that helied the image of Scottish skiing. The Nevis Range ski area, only 10 minutes' drive from my tiny but comfortable bedroom in Fort William station, is the newest Scottish ski resort, having opened in the 1989/90 season. So its facilities reach a standard of which the dour old Scottish Ski Club would have strongly disapproved: a six-seat gondola carries you 2.3km from the road up to a big restaurant and bar, and 10 ski lifts cover a ski area which stretches up to the peak of Anach Mor, at 1,220m the highest point in Scotland to be reached by a lift.

The views from the restaurant terrace were vast on such a clear day. Set on the north face of the Nevis range, the resort looks down on the wide Lochy valley between Loch Linnhe and Loch Lochy, which makes a soft, green-and-brown foreground to a panorama of rugged, mainly snow-covered mountains stretching from the island of Rhum, out in the Atlantic, across to Inverness on the North Sea coast. An etched metal plate on the terrace balustrade attempts to identify each mountain, but the jagged line was

too long to follow and the names were no easier for an English-speaker, being mostly had anagrams (Sgurr Thuilim?) or Gaelic epithets (Sìth Mhàil Bheathain).

Poor Nevis has had a terrible season so far: the resort hoped to have had 48,000 skier-days by now, but has achieved only a third of that number. This January was one of the driest on record; and February's good snowfalls were washed down the mountain by heavy rain. Which is a great pity, because a new, £13m resort needs better luck, and because – even on last week's limited snow – it offers good, challenging skiing. Many of the pistes on the main face of the mountain were narrow, the thin snow having been bulldozed in from the edges to provide a reasonable, vegetation- and rock-free surface, and all had big patches of ice, offering an experience to go with the pleasure. But the main snow bowl (well, a side-plate, really), with a red run merging into a blue, was well covered and exhilarating.

In one respect, Nevis lived up to the image of Scotland as a tough place to ski. As noted last week, Killington's double-diamond black runs had been a doddle, but even the

reds at Nevis were a desirable challenge, most of all in an east-facing bowl called Colne Dubh. Cally Fleming, the resort's marketing manager, insisted that I had to ski into the bowl – and made sure that I did so by leading me there, even though its lift wasn't working, and there was also a slight risk of avalanche.

We edged up a sheet-ice slope to a ridge near the peak. I looked over the edge. Stob Mhàil Bheathain! From the ridge was a near-vertical drop on to a very steep slope, which levelled out gradually into an un-pistoned bowl full of snow. Rather than have Fleming do it, I pushed myself off the ridge, hit the snow flying – and then did a slow, anxious traverse, wondering when I would dare to turn down the slope. By the third turn, of course, I was loving it.

I would have had another go – maybe two or three; but without the lift, it was a long haul around the resort to get back to the ridge. And then I might have missed the summit run off the peak. It's only a short blue run, but I spent a long time on it; I kept stopping to get a bit more of the dramatic view to the south west, of Ben Nevis, Cam Dearg and Sgurr a' Mhàim.

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# History comes alive

Homework? It's fun for all the family.

By Deborah Jackson

At school, studying for Geography O-level, we compared and contrasted the formation of river valleys. Theo my parents took me to the Lake District, and there at the head of Windermere was the finest glacial valley of them all.

Days out with an educational bent are brilliant for children to find inspiration in a restored building, an ancient costume or a virtual scene from the past. Over the next two weeks we are making a swift tour of a section of the National Curriculum: the Key Stage Two History Programme, which has six study units for seven-to-11-year-olds, each matched with ideas for family outings.

**Unit 1: Romans, Anglo-Saxons and Vikings in Britain**  
Pupils must study one of these, and most schools opt for the Romans, who left a wealth of forts, amphitheatres, weapons, and roads to get us to them.

**Romans:** Get an insight into their domestic life at Rockbourne Roman Villa near Fordingbridge in Hampshire (01725 518541), which has mosaics, a coin hoard, leather shoes and even human skeletons. Meanwhile Chedworth Roman Villa at Yarnworth, Cheltenham (01242 890256) has its own water shrine, bath-houses and mosaics.

And there's no deeper cleansing experience than the steamy waters that bubble up from the Sacred Spring in Bath at 46 C. The Roman Baths Museum (01225 477785) displays votive offerings, the gilt bronze head of the goddess Sulis Minerva and 2,000-year-old curses cast into the waters by Romans with revenge on their minds.

For military organisation see Caerleon Roman Fortress (01222 500200), once home of 5,500 elite Roman infantry. The soldiers' giant leisure complex had heated changing rooms, a swimming pool and a gymnasium, plus a 6,000-seater auditorium for gladiatorial events.

And then there's Hadrian's Wall. Where should you start? Senhouse Roman Museum on the Cumbrian coast (01900 816168), once the headquarters of Hadrian's coastal defence system, is home to a large collection of altar-stones and some stunning sculpture. Look out for the famous Serpent Stone. Heading east, Northumberland's Housesteads Roman Fort at Haydon Bridge (01434 344363) features the only known Roman hospital in Britain, and a 24-seater latrine with flush tank. Nearby, Corbridge near Hexham (01434 632349) has the famous Corbridge Lion.

For a more intimate view of Roman life, the Verulamium Museum at St Albans (01727 819339) has re-created rooms, hands-on discovery areas and

computer databases. Once a month, legionaries describe the lifestyle and tactics of the Roman Imperial Army.

**Anglo-Saxons:** There are plenty of Saxon churches around, but for a glimpse into the secular way of life, Bede's World in Jarrow (0191 489 2106) depicts work and play in the early Middle Ages - with Anglo-Saxon cooking demonstrations. Outside, an Anglo-Saxon farm features rare breeds and authentic crops.

**West Stow Country Park** (01284 728718) in Suffolk contains a pagan Anglo-Saxon village, based on a settlement dating from AD420-650, with reconstructed oak buildings.

**Vikings:** No study is complete without a trip to the Jorvik Viking Centre in York (01904 643211), which has tools, clothing and other clues to a forgotten way of life. Travel in a "time car" back to Normandy Britain, hear Old Norse as it was spoken, experience the dark, smoky homes and the smells of fish and pigs in the market place.

**Unit 4: ancient Greece**  
All junior-age children are expected to learn about the ancient Greeks. Unfortunately, the best trappings of this distant civilisation are housed in the giant tourist park known as Athens.

In Britain, you could begin at the British Museum (0171 636 1555), home to the much-disputed Elgin Marbles. An extensive collection begins with the Greek Bronze Age, including marble figurines dating from 3000 BC, and carved pillars from elaborate tombs, from 1300 BC. Greek myths and legends are depicted in statues, pottery and jewellery.

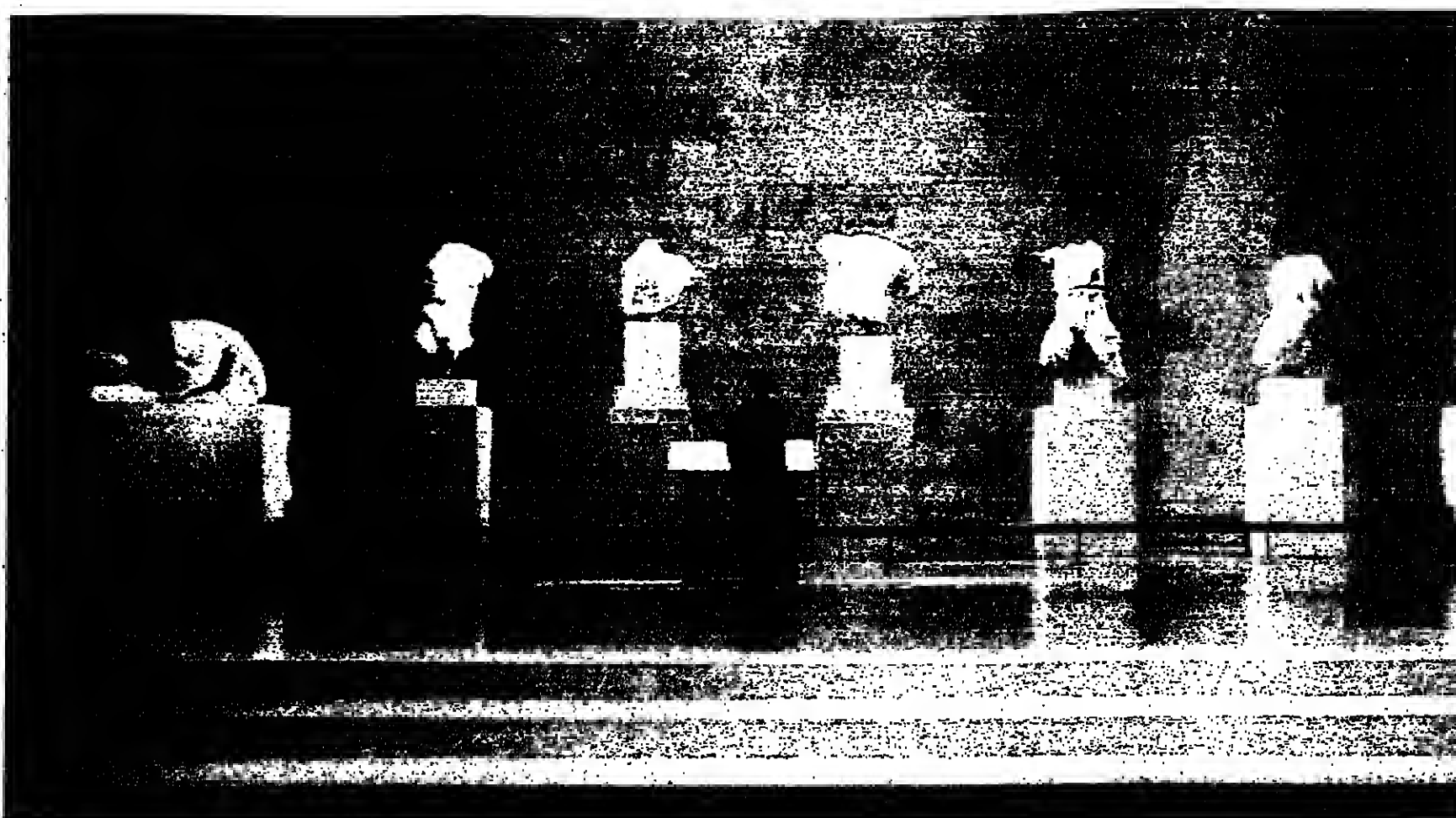
Also open without appointment is the Ure Museum of Greek Archaeology, a large room in the classics department of Reading University (01734 318420). It has painted pottery and other artefacts.

**Unit 6: a past non-European society**  
Options include ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, the Indus Valley, the Maya, Benin, the Aztecs.

The ancient Egyptians have Tutankhamun to thank for most of their 20th-century publicity. The boy king's tomb, mummy and golden mask have been replicated in Dorchester, Dorset (01305 269571), where visitors can stroll as if through the pyramid itself.

For the rest, it's back to the British Museum, where the new Mexican gallery explores 4,000 years of "Mesoamerican" tribes and peoples. The Aztecs and Mayas are well represented, with examples of ritual dress, idols, fertility symbols and creation myths.

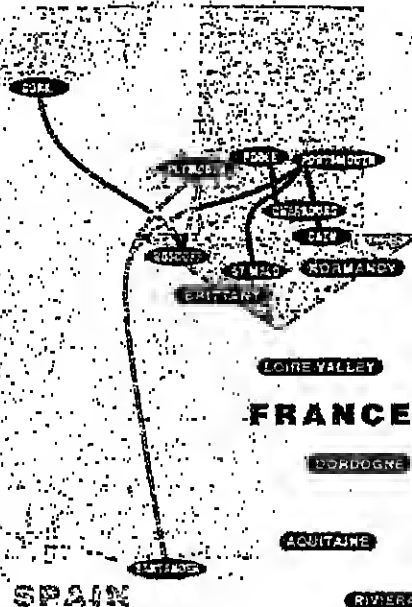
Next week: Life in Tudor Times; Victorian Britain; and Britain since 1930.



Rocks of ages: the much disputed Elgin Marbles at the British Museum

PHOTOGRAPH: REUTERS

## OUR FRANCE AND SPAIN



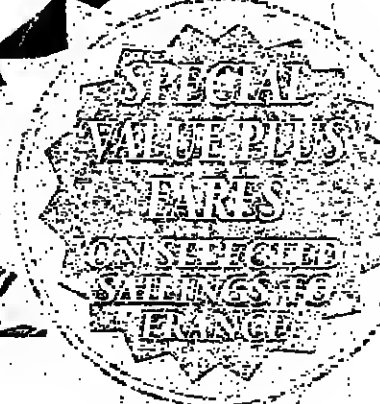
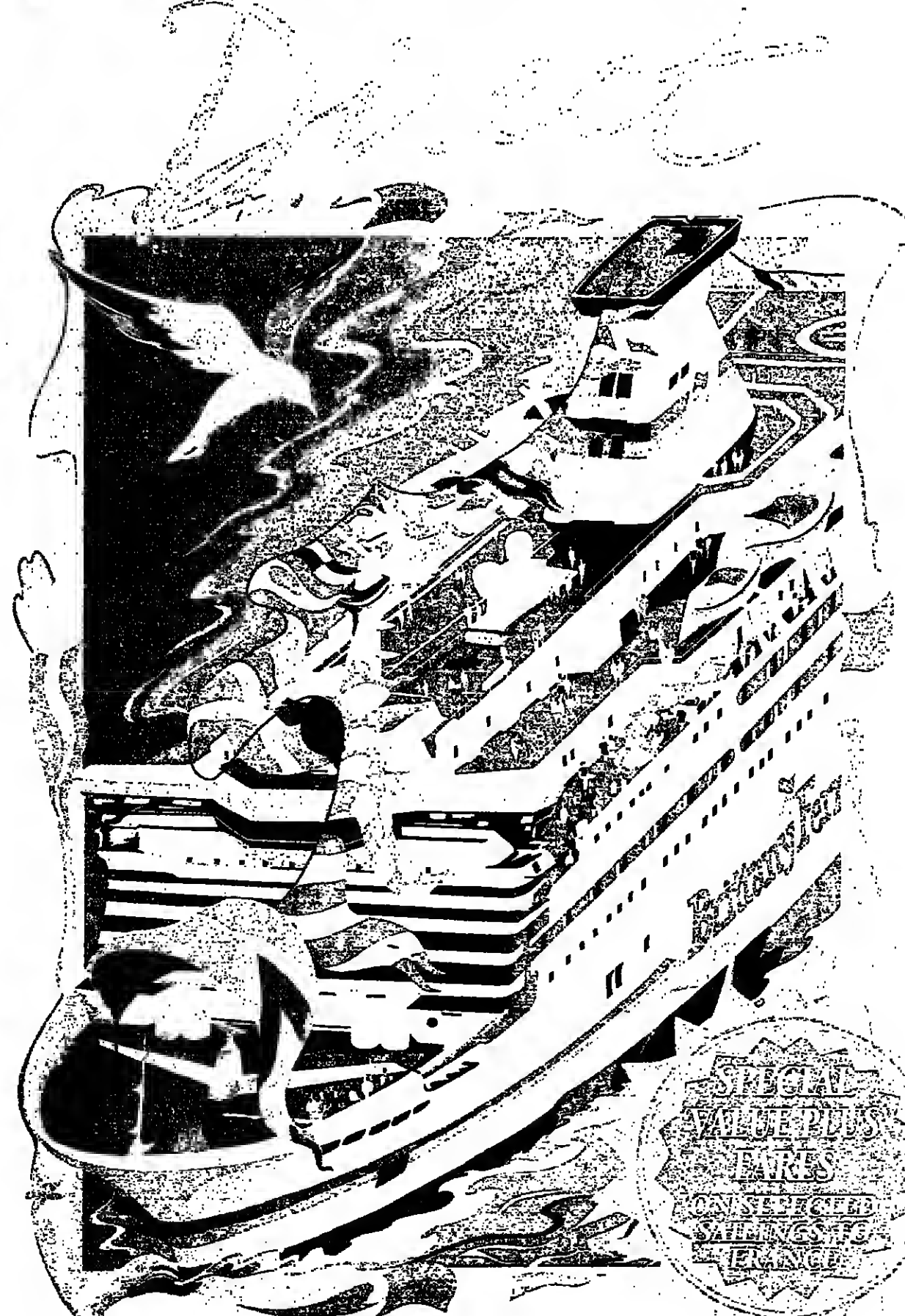
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# The lure of the good life

Smallholdings are 'in', reports Daniel Butler

John Seymour is a walking advertisement for the philosophy of "small means good": a fit, healthy man of 60 who could easily pass for 40.

"We are genuinely self-sufficient: we produce all our own food and live and eat extremely well," says this father of the British self-sufficient movement.

He is in London on a flying visit, and it is clear from the way that he keeps glancing at his watch that two days in town have been more than enough. Now he is chafing to get back to his smallholding in County Wexford: "London is nothing more than an ugly muddle of buildings joined on to each other," he says. "Most people who live in cities are purely parasitical. One day the infrastructure will break down. They will find nothing happens when they turn on the tap or switch on the light. What will we do then if we've lost all our old skills?"

He says this desire to master dying crafts lies behind his decision in 1956 to buy a smallholding in Suffolk and take up farming: "I thought I was the only person in the world trying to rediscover lost skills and get closer to the land," he says. "Then I found a group of people in America doing the same thing, but there was no one else in Britain moving in that direction." The picture was the same eight years later when he moved to Pembrokeshire with his wife and three daughters, but over the last 30 years much has changed: "Now 'drop-ins' [as he calls his fellow New Age peasants] almost outnumber the locals."

The new converts were a mixed blessing, and as they moved in, so Seymour moved west, upping sticks for Ireland 16 years ago, where he now has a five-acre holding based around a crossbred Jersey-Angus cow: "She is the middle of the arch," he explains

proudly. "Her milk feeds us, the pigs and the poultry. She provides all our milk, cheese and butter—not to mention all that manure, which keeps the place fertile." Tea, coffee and cereals need to be bought, but otherwise this small plot feeds three adults full-time and about 80 students a year, who come to learn his skills on week-long courses.

There are no figures to back up Seymour's anecdotal evidence about a shift to "the good life", but estate agents along the Welsh border (where smallholdings are still common), say that demand for such properties is booming.

Seymour has certainly played a part as a sort of spiritual leader for this move. In 1973 he and his wife Sally published a manual, *Self-Sufficiency*, which was an instant best-seller. This was followed up in 1976 by an illustrated guide, *The Complete Book of Self-Sufficiency*, which has since sold more than 650,000 copies across 13 countries. As a result, he has inevitably been called the movement's mentor, a term that he resents intensely: "I'm certainly not a guru," he protests. "I don't have a turban or a flowing robe. If I can inspire a few people to make their own beer, that's good enough for me."

At first glance, the demand for his courses and suitable smallholdings, at a time when the general agricultural trend is towards larger and larger farms, would seem to suggest that Seymour's vision is catching on. Appearance, however, is deceptive, says the estate agent Ryan Williams, at McCartneys in Hay-on-Wye in Herefordshire. He sees few buyers who are committed to total self-sufficiency: "The smallholding kick which was all the rage a few years back has stumbled with the harsh reality of Welsh winters," he says. Ironically,



John Seymour: "Most people who live in cities are purely parasitical"

PHOTO: JOHN MINZEHAN

Williams believes that much of the impetus towards self-sufficiency comes from those same electrical consumer goods that Seymour's "hardline" greens despise.

Thanks to faxes, improved telecommunications and—above all—computers, it is increasingly possible for people to "telecommute". "There is no typical buyer, but many are people who work from home," says Williams. Other small farms sell to people who have taken early redundancy and want an active retirement, while some go to young professionals who want a safe environment for their children and are prepared to commute relatively long distances to the Midlands or M4 corridor.

Thus it seems that a desire for an improved quality of life, rather than a romantic desire to produce their own food, is the main motive

behind today's New Age peasantry. Recent research by the Henley Centre for Forecasting suggests a widespread desire across the population to shift to a more leisured lifestyle: 42 per cent of those surveyed said they would like to go part time if they could afford it. A quarter said they would take a lower-paid job if it meant less stress, and 28 per cent said they would choose more leisure rather than more money. Of those questioned, 16 per cent said they would even take a pay cut if it meant they could spend more time at home.

Of course, once they are hounded with a mortgage, personal pensions and credit cards, it can be difficult or impossible for many people to make the financial adjustments that come with a slower pace of life. This explains

why so many of Williams's customers are either young parents keen to swap small, but valuable, urban flats for cheaper, big rural properties, or older people with adequate savings to take early retirement. Even for these people, however, there can be hidden surprises in the form of things previously taken for granted—such as the absence of local supermarkets and restaurants.

But Seymour has words of grudging encouragement for those reluctant to leave urban life: "Cities are desirable, provided they're not too big," he says. "Civilisation gives the true countryman the benefits of culture, universities and so on. After all, the Greece of Homer's time—where there were no cities to speak of—was a poorer place than that of Plato."

Mud, mud, hideous mud: that is what heats the blood of anyone looking over the Severn Estuary from Oldbury as the tide is ebbing, and that is what has driven Philip Jones, one of the area's last traditional salmon fishermen, out of business.

He is in no doubt as to the cause of the disaster. "It's that bastard there," he says, pointing past the original Severn bridge to the second crossing, five miles downstream. He claims that the accretion of mud began soon after construction of the new bridge started, in 1992. Before that, he used to walk out a mile to fish over rock scoured bare by the tide; now the glutinous sludge is 9ft deep, and would swallow any man trying to cross it.

What has happened—in Philip's view—is that the 40-odd caissons supporting the second bridge have taken the force out of the tides, which rise and fall as much as 40ft and are among the most powerful in the world. The result is that silt is no longer carried past in suspension, but falls out of the slack water and builds up on the bottom. He is now seeking compensation for the loss of his livelihood from the Department of Transport. The powers-that-be disclaim responsibility, and maintain that the silting of the lake and the approaches to it has been caused by natural shifts in the bed of the river.

Philip is the last of a long line. His grandfather, father and uncle all spent their lives fishing the river, and he himself grew up with no other ambition than to follow in their footsteps.

For centuries salmon have been caught off Oldbury in two forms of trap: pntchers—tapering, conical willow baskets set out in tiers across likely stretches of the river—and lade-nets, which resemble giant shrimping nets and are manipulated by individuals standing in the water. Both devices depend on the fact that in the lower reaches of the Severn salmon cannot see, because the water is opaque, full of silt stirred up by the tremendous pull of the tides.

In recent years putcher fishing has declined, with a drop in the numbers of salmon coming up-river. But lade-fishing continued to flourish until recently, especially off Oldbury, in a long, narrow pool a



Duff Hart-Davis

For centuries salmon have been caught in tidal pools... now there's sludge

mile out to sea, left behind by every falling tide.

For a stranger, it is fascinating to look out across the glistening, three-mile expanse of the estuary and watch the tide go down. On a cloudy morning everything is a mysterious gunmetal colour—water, sand, mud, sky, all grey—and it needs an expert such as Philip Jones to interpret the changes that steal over the scene.

"See that horseshoe mark coming up?" he says. "That's where the pool is. He'll be up in a moment. See those two pieces of rock starting to show? That's what I call the Haddock. Only they aren't rocks; they're man-made walls, built to keep the fish in."

In the old days Philip would walk out with his lade-net and take up station on one of the Standings—three-tiered stone platforms built for the purpose. The pool, he explains, used to be about 6ft deep for much of its length; fish cut off in it by the ebbing tide would drop back towards the seaward end.

There, finding themselves above a rock shelf, they would turn back upstream, and the lone fisherman, spotting a fin or a track through the water, would lower his net as it came towards him.

Fresh-run fish were prized in local pubs—the Anchor at Oldbury, the Windbound, the Berkeley Arms—and Harvey's restaurant in Bristol prided itself on serving the first Severn salmon of the season.

Now the tradition of Oldbury fishing is gone, hurried beneath 25 million tons of blue-grey sludge.

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When making contact with people for the first time it is advisable to meet in a public place and let a member of your family or trusted friend know where you will be.

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**SAGITTARIAN**, INDEPENDENT, mid-40's male, GSOH, no lies, eager to explore the gender side of life, seeks similarly enthusiastic, independent lady companion. 35+, to share the journey. Box No 120040.

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**GERMAN LADY**, PENSIONER, single, and good-looking, would like to meet a single gentleman for friendship, dating, and possibly sexual relationship. Photo appreciated. Box No 120042.

**SMILING BRUNETTE**, (30-40), not fluffy, inclined to join busy but unpretentious Arts Producer (35, 40) at preview. Relax - just good company, laughter and good fun (possibly). Photograph guaranteed reply. Box No 120044.

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**MALE, 44 YRS OLD, IPSWICH**, single, no dependants, computer, gardening, dancing, nature. WFLM pretty lady up to 35 yrs, who has heart of gold. P.A. Box No 120050.

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**GAY PROF. M. M. M.**, 40, slim, age 40 going on 35, lives in a nice house, central London, in a central area. Interests include doing new things, enjoying life in a relaxed kind of way. Seeks friendship and possibly more. WFLM, caring, intelligent, attractive, mature, any nationality, who might enjoy prospect of developing partnership, having fun. Photo appreciated. Box No 120054.

50 من الأصل



# The joys of parenting

In the final article in her current series, Anna Pavord gives advice on propagating new young plants from past favourites

Propagating plants is a benign kind of disease. It can be kept reasonably under control by a surfeit of children, but it advances unchecked when the number of mouths round the kitchen table starts to dwindle.

The disease is made more dangerous by the fact that most plants, being infinitely more subtle than people, offer more than one way of perpetuating themselves. The exceptions are the annuals, which germinate, grow to their full potential, seed themselves and die within the space of a single season. The only way of propagating them is by sowing seed.

But with other plants, you can choose whether you sow seed, divide plants up, take cuttings, or make layers - which is a lazy kind of cutting. The method you choose depends on the end result that you are looking for.

The point about cuttings is that each one will grow into a perfect replica of its parent - if that is what you want. Nurserymen depend on this sameness. But each seed in a seed pod may turn out to be a subtle variation of the parent, since the progeny sometimes skip back, as children do, to pick up a trait that has been suppressed for several generations.

The variation is a safety device. A flower that has a slightly different shape or colour from that of its parent may be more successful at attracting pollinating insects. A leaf that grows narrow, or develops a woolly texture, may survive drought more easily. Plants subscribe to the harsh doctrine of survival of the fittest. But gardeners intervene, selecting seedlings to grow on, for the sake of a rare mutation in the flower, or a variegation on a leaf, that has nothing to do with survival.

The seed-sowing season gets into its stride about now, though you should never be in too much of a hurry to sow seed of annuals or tender bedding plants. Many trials have shown that seed sown in April catches up fast with seed sown in March.

Use small pots for initial sowings, two-thirds filled with compost, topped up with vermiculite. Water the pots from above with a fine rose

before sowing. Soaking pots in water can mean that the compost gets waterlogged. Scatter seed over the surface of the vermiculite. Very fine seed will not need covering. Larger seeds can be gently stirred into the surface of the vermiculite.

Cover the pots with glass or cling film, and then with newspaper to exclude light - though some seeds, including ageratum, antirrhinum, begonia, cineraria, impatiens, lobelia, mimulus, nicotiana, petunia and salvia, germinate best in light and should not be covered. As soon as the seedlings emerge, remove the covers and keep the pots well watered.

Prick off the seedlings into large seed trays as soon as the first real leaves develop. Very small seedlings

themselves be flowering plants by late summer. Take shoots with three pairs of leaves, cutting just below the last pair of leaves. Set them in a pot filled with fast-draining compost. Cover with a polythene bag and keep at a temperature between 50F and 60F. Move the cuttings into separate pots when their own growth shows that they have rooted.

Cut old, overwintered geranium plants hard back in early spring. Water and feed them to encourage new shoots, which will provide soft-wood cuttings. Any healthy shoot, about 3-4 in long, will make a cutting. Snap it off just below a leaf joint. Take off all the leaves except the very young ones at the tip of the cutting. Set the cuttings round the edge of a 5-in pot of compost. Do not cover them. Put them on when they are rooted.

Semi-ripe cuttings are the ones you take when the current season's shoots are just beginning to harden, but are still pliable (generally between mid-June and August). The shoots must be healthy and vigorous. Simple stem cuttings can be snipped in 4-in or 6-in lengths from any likely-looking section of stem. Internodal cuttings are made by cutting half-way between leaf joints on a stem.

Nodal cuttings are made through the hump immediately below a leaf joint. You then whip off the bottom leaves attached to the lump before putting the cutting into its pot.

Hibiscus roots well from stem cuttings, taken at the end of July or August. Take 6-in sections of stem and line them out in sandy soil in a cold frame, where they have some winter protection. Try the technique with hydrangeas, too, by taking 4-in sections of semi-ripe wood and sticking them round the side of a pot of compost. Cover the pot with a plastic bag until the cuttings have found their feet.

A heel cutting is what you get when you take hold of a side shoot (not one that is flowering) and give it a sharp tug downwards. It comes away with a bit of the old stem attached. That is the "heel". Both huddleia and chaenomeles root from heel cuttings, taken in late July or August. Choose plump lateral shoots 4 in or 5 in long, and pull

**Plants, being infinitely more subtle than people, offer more than one way of reproducing themselves**

such as alyssum and lobelia can be pricked out in small clumps. Harden off the plants gradually before planting them out in permanent positions. In hilly coastal areas, this may be in mid-April. In central Scotland, it is unlikely to be a good idea to do it before June.

Cuttings of plants can be taken at three different stages. Softwood cuttings are those taken from young shoots between March and June. In some ways they are the most difficult to look after, as they often need mist and warmth before they will root, and they need to root fast before they exhaust their own food supplies. The exceptions are geranium and fuchsia, both of which root very easily from softwood cuttings. This system also works with cotinus, lilac, lavender and potentilla.

Fuchsia cuttings taken now will



Spring, by Flemish painter Abel Grimmer (1570-1619)

MUSEE DES BEAUX ARTS, LILLE ET ARCHIVE

them off with a heel. Trim off the growing top and the bottom leaves and put the cuttings into a cold frame, pushing them into the ground to about half their length.

A basal cutting is one made with a clean cut through the slight swelling that usually occurs where side shoots join the main stem. This is all that distinguishes it from a heel cutting.

Basal cuttings of choysia taken in late July or August will root in pots

covered with a plastic bag or (in mild districts) lined out direct in the ground. A propagating frame set at about 60 F will hurry up the rooting process of shrubs such as choysia and ceanothus, but is not essential.

The older the wood you take for cuttings, the longer the cutting itself is, and the longer it takes to root. So hardwood cuttings, taken from the ripened wood of a shrub or tree in autumn and early winter,

sometimes take a year to root. Many common shrubs such as berberis, dogwood, cotoneaster, escallonia, privet and ribes root from hardwood cuttings.

A layer is a kind of hardwood cutting, with the added advantage that if it doesn't take, the evidence isn't so obvious. Shrubs with naturally low-growing branches are the easiest targets. Rhododendrons and azaleas propagate particularly well by this method, and I have also

had 100 per cent success with *Hydranga villosa*.

When you notice a likely branch for layering, snick the underside of it about a foot back from the growing tip. Scrape out a hollow in the ground underneath this point and peg the stem down into it. Cover it with earth and put a flat stone on top of it to stop it springing free. A year later, the stem should have rooted. To free it, simply cut the stem behind the layer.

**Flower of the hour:** *Crocus tommasinianus*, the mauve-purple crocus that grows wild on the eastern coast of the Adriatic, in Bosnia and Serbia. It is one of the earliest of the easy members of the crocus tribe to flower in the garden and it establishes and increases without much effort on the part of the gardener. The narrow, furled buds continue their performance well into March. It was named by the Dean of Manchester, the Rev William Herbert, after his botanical friend, Signor Tommasini of Trieste. Selected forms such as 'Whitewell Purple' and 'Barr's Purple' have darker, richer flowers than the norm. Use them in grass and scatter them under deciduous shrubs.



## CUTTINGS

life before we get too decrepit," explains Mr Fair. I have found their mail order service one of the best in the business, with plants vigorously grown and beautifully packed. In a special clearance sale, they are offering four of their plants for the price of three. The offer extends only to plants available in March: 14 large-flowered hybrids, including 'Comtesse de Bouchard' and 'Rouge Cardinal', nine different montana types, four different viticellias and the herbaceous clematis 'Petit Faucon' and 'C. joniana 'Praecox'. The Valley Clematis Nursery, Willingham Road, Hainton, Lincoln LN3 6LN (01507 313398).

The Alpine Garden Society and the Scottish Rock Garden Club are holding a show today (12pm-4.30, admission £1) at the Lancaster and Morecambe College of Further Education, Morecambe Road, Lancaster. On display are primulas, cyclamen, soldanelias, fritillaries, saxifrages and sempervivums.

The Hazel Revolution, a one-day conference on managing hazel coppice, will be held at West Dean College, near Chichester, West Sussex on Tuesday 25 March (9.15am-4.30pm). It is organised by the Wessex Coppice Group and the Timber Growers Association, and will look at the new markets that have opened up for hazel products over the last two years and examine ways of meeting the demand. The cost is £39. (Linda Glynn, Wessex Coppice Group, 01962 772030).

Sad news for clematis lovers. Keith and Carol Fair of the Valley Clematis Nursery have decided that this will be their last season. "We want to enjoy some of the other pleasures of

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## The 'hope chest' of the Aran Islanders is sustained by tourism. By Jeremy Seal

and Doolin in County Clare. But three-mile-long Inishmaan, the remote "Middle Island", has always looked askance on the outside world. At the island's quay, poignantly named An Cora or "hope chest", after the luggage of those embarked on long-term travels, families were standing by their ageing tractors to await relatives as they came ashore laden with mainland booty - tins of everything from paint to Ovaltine, planks of fresh wood, rolls of roofing felt and lino paper. They disappeared in a gloriously motley convoy down the one road, a nibbled ribbon of tarmac dividing a patchwork of tiny fields hemmed by immaculate dry-limestone walls.

We passed a few, beached currauchs, traditional longboats with tar-covered canvas hulls, and followed a sign across the fields to Cregmore, Angela Faherty's B&B. Angela, from County Roscommon, met her Inishmaan husband in Boston and moved to the island 20 years ago. "Oh, we get a few visitors," explained Angela. "Mostly, it's anthropologists and film crews; just now there's a lot from Germany filming up at Rory Concanon's, the island's last surviving currauch maker. The islanders want to keep it this way, they don't want day trippers like they get on the other islands."

As the Inishmaan community suffers with terminal collapse (just 20 children attend the island school), the people talk of developing "cultural tourism", but not with any great conviction. In the meantime, the island remains a place apart - even by Aran standards - as we

discovered when we explored it the next morning. Those extraordinary walls parcel up the entire island into small fields that each sustain a single cow, and contain a sloping stone ramp the size of a double bed that feeds rainwater into the trough at its foot. In one field a woman wearing a colourful patterned shawl characteristic of the island crouched over a calf that had been born in the night, murmuring softly to it. The fields gave out at limestone terraces, freakishly flat and sea-swept clean, but the odd perfect rectangle of rock the size of a car that some unimaginable storm had dumped there. These in turn gave way to sheer cliffs that threw up columns of spume while seals barked far below, their heads looking like tarred footballs.

The path led to Sygne's Chair, a stone hivouse amidst a moonscape geology, where the playwright J M Synge used to come at the turn of the century to take his ease during protracted stays on the island. An old sign pointed to the house in the centre of the island where Synge produced some of his greatest works. Where an interpretation centre would have been long established on the other islands, here weeds poked from a dilapidated thatch above dirty, locked rooms bousing an assortment of junk. The effect was unintentionally atmospheric, and spoke volumes for Irishman attitudes towards the outside world, and perhaps to the blow-in playwright himself.

In the cosy village pub, a fire was burning. Locals were lining up



**Inishmaan isolation: a patchwork of tiny fields hemmed by im-**

Easter Saturday pints of Guinness beneath decorations that had been up since Christmas (and probably not the most recent one).

A quarter-hour walk brought us through the lanes in from Faherty's B&B to the island's airport. The airport building was locked and we sat under a buzz of insects as rabbits nibbled at the runway where a sign featuring an (unlikely) airliner warned off the unwary. Then the airport came to life as plane and staff appeared all at once from different directions: a nine-seater Britten Norman Islander, the airport's fire officer, who turned out to be Angela Faherty's husband, and the elderly man who trebled as air traffic control, ticket issuer and check-in, which meant weighing passengers as well as baggage, on a pair of bath-

room scales. Once aboard, we skimmed low across Gregory's Sound to Inishmore, with the sea showing aquamarine beneath us, on the beach, figures were forking seaweed into trailers to be used as fertiliser on kitchen gardens.

Three minutes after take-off, we touched down at Inishmore, from where a hangered Transit van ferried passengers into town. In Joe Mac's pub in Kilronan, Sean the ferry skipper joined us for a pint of Guinness. He arrived as a blow-in six years ago and was now bringing up two children on the island. Sean accepted that tourism was having its effect, but did not doubt that it would take more than a few chip shops to spoil the magic of these islands. He remembered how he had been greeted with the funniest of looks by the other skippers when

**ulate dry-limestone walls** PHOTOGRAPH, CHRISTOPHER HILL PHOTO © KAPPA

he first arrived, until one of them put him right. "You trying to drown the lot of us?" the skipper asked him. "You keep turning your boat agin the sun." As Sean explained, it was considered extremely bad luck to turn the boat to the east, against the direction of the sun.

"It can get busy in the summer," he admitted. "But the crush is very concentrated. If you avoid the middle of Kilmanan and the road up to Dun Aengus, you won't see anybody." We hired bikes and, sure enough, at the other end of the island, we had all to ourselves the undisturbed ruins that litter these islands.

Like the more famous Dun Aengus further west, Dun Ducaithair, the "black fort" was a great semicircular fortification perched on a clifftop above the sea and protected on the land side by upright, angled stones, or *chevaux de frise*. Bicycling on, we passed the limestone memorials to the sea dogs that line the road around the village of Killeany, and made our way up the track to the ruins of a fine seventh-century oratory dedicated to St. Benan. The views were stunning. Inisheer appeared in the distance beyond Inishmaan, and we could see Sean's ferry leaving Killyronan for the mainland. As we watched him leave port and swing the boat round to the west, we could almost hear Aran skippers everywhere breathing a collective sigh of relief.

*The best source of information on the Aran Islands is the Galway office of the Irish Tourist Board; call 00 353 91 563081.*

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**Inishmaan isolation: a patchwork of tiny fields hemmed by immaculate dry-limestone walls** PHOTOGRAPH: CHRISTOPHER HILL PHOTOGRAPHY

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# An A to Z of the British

Simon Calder twins towns to view options for 'grandes vacances'

**T**he French feel good factor *est arrivé*. Liberated by cheap fares, millions of British travellers are making plans for crossing the Channel this spring and summer.

Yet when you start planning a trip, the complexity of planes and boats, trains and tunnels proves baffling. So to show you how to get from A to B, *moins cher*, *The Independent* has created a unique A-Z of ways to reach destinations all over France. Some of the methods help you to take advantage of brand-new (or yet-to-be-introduced) services, while others will simply save you money.

All fares shown are returns, and include applicable taxes. They are quotes obtained anonymously by telephone researchers on Thursday and Friday this week. Company contacts are given opposite.

## Aberdeen to Antibes

Strange but true: Luton is the new gateway to Europe. Low-cost airlines such as Debonair and easyJet have turned the Bedfordshire airport into an important air hub, especially for Aberdeenians sun-seekers. A flight connection at Luton on easyJet can get you to Nice for £168.40 return. The good news is that Nice airport is just a 10-minute cab ride from Antibes. The not-quite-so-terrible news is that the flight schedules mean you must spend a night in Luton in each direction.

## Birmingham to Bordeaux

The global HQ of National Express coaches are in Birmingham, so not surprisingly there is a good deal by bus to from the Midlands to the Médoc. The bus company will get you to Victoria Coach Station in under three hours for a modest £12; then Eurotaxis has a direct overnight service to Bordeaux for £99, allowing you to compare the 17th-century Rue du Loup with the 20th-century Bullring.

**Cardiff to Charles de Gaulle** BA 78/5, one of the more wayward flights in the British Airways timetable, wafers from Aberdeen to Paris by way of Belfast City and Cardiff-Wales

airports. If you buy a World Offer ticket from Cardiff to Charles de Gaulle by 26 March it will cost £116.40 – only a fiver more than the first class train to London. It is tricky to make a case for the main Paris airport being a destination in its own right, but the sturdy old aerodrome of Le Bourget – halfway into Paris – houses one of the great unsung museums, devoted to Air and Space.

## Dover to Dunkerque

The Sealink between these two ports has been broken. Instead, nip up the Kent coast to Ramsgate and take the new Holyman Salfy fast ferry to Dunkerque. Starting on 15 May, the Australian-made catamaran is scheduled to take 75 minutes. A car plus five people costs £151 for any length of stay on selected sailings all year (with restrictions on Friday and Saturday departures in July and August).

## Edinburgh to Epemay

In theory, this trip is easy. The Rail Shop's brochure boasts of through trains from Britain's cities to Paris this summer, as it did last year, but the promise has yet to be kept. There is some hope that direct Eurostar trains from Edinburgh and Glasgow via the East Coast main line will finally begin in June. Timings and fares for the through trains to Paris have yet to be calculated, but expect an introductory offer of £99 – with a journey time of eight hours from Edinburgh. Bolt on £10 and 75 minutes each way to Epemay; you can reach the maison de Molière with just a five-minute walk between Gare du Nord and de l'Est in Paris.

## Folkestone to Foix

Few ferries serve Folkestone's handsome harbour any more. Instead, burrow beneath the Channel on Le Shuttle. Pack your car with up to eight other people, and you all get to Calais in 35 minutes for £149 in April or May. To reach the fine town of Foix in the Pyrenean foothills involves a drive of 1,000km (625 miles), possibly arduous with nine in a car. Still, the A20 through France, speeding the journey south, is being improved faster than is the A20 through Folkestone.



New high-speed catamarans (below left) save time across the Channel, but do not permit travellers to sample the bracing sea air on deck (left). MAIN PICTURE: HULTON GETTY

## Oxford to Orléans

The Thames to the Loire is mostly navigable by water, but hitchhiking could be quicker. Students who don't mind a slow getaway should thumb along the M40, swerve around London on the M25 and continue to Folkestone on the M20. A "Paris, please" sign will earn you blank looks or derision, but could get you a free ride through the Channel Tunnel and on to the French capital. The patience of a saint such as Joan of Arc will help on the biker's graveyard that is the Boulevard Périphérique, but you might manage to thumb from Oxford to Orléans for £0.

## Pimlico to Paris

Apart from hitching, the lowest fare remains Hoverspeed's £27 bus fare from Victoria (a short walk from Pimlico) to the Gare du Nord. You arrive later than Eurostar folk, but richer. Don't forget your passport.

## Queen's Park to Quimper

If, instead, your bedst is in London NW6, take the tube four stops to Paddington. The Golden Hind Pullman gets you to Plymouth, and the overnight Brittany ferry (£66 per person in a two-berth) to Roscoff. By dawn you are in Brittany, even with the uncertainties of *transports normaux* you should make Quimper by eleven. In the city that boasts a Musée de la Crêpe, celebrate with a pancake as mid-morning snack.

## Reigate to Rennes

Air France has cut many of its services from Britain, leaving only Paris and Strasbourg. But the range of regional destinations on other airlines is still wide – especially to Brittany. Bus 727 from Reigate deposits you at Gatwick, with departures to Brest, Nantes or Rennes on Brit air for £142.50

## Sheffield to Strasbourg

Would you believe you can fly from Sheffield to Strasbourg? Didn't think so, especially since South Yorkshire has no airport. But head along to Humberstone for Air UK's departure to Amsterdam and a connection on KLM to the home of the European parliament. Steel yourself for the fare: £220.

## Glasgow to Grenoble

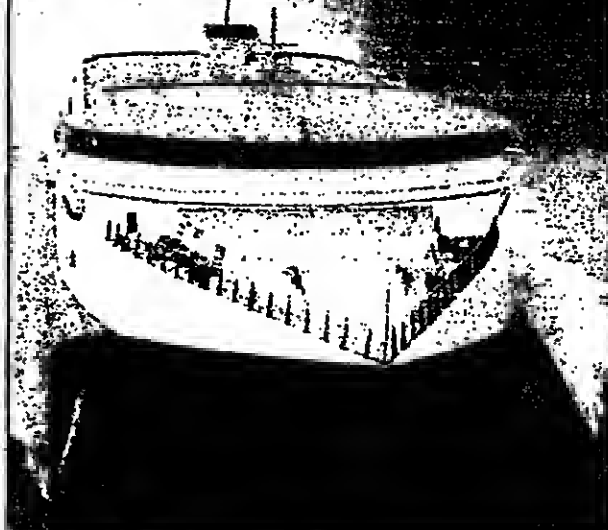
Go from the Clyde to the Alps via Essex. At the end of this month, flightline begins operating flights from Stansted to Geneva: tickets are being sold through Plus Travel for £122 return through the summer. Bolt on a Ryanair return from Preswick to Stansted for £70, including a rail ticket from Glasgow Central or any other Scottish station, and you will be within 60 miles of Grenoble. But with the pound having appreciated even more against the Swiss franc than *vis-à-vis* the French currency, perhaps you'd best *resier* in Geneva.

## Huddersfield to Honfleur

A "supersaver" rail ticket from the West Yorkshire town to Portsmouth costs a whopping £36.50 – more than many Channel crossings with a car at this time of year. Without special offers, P&O's Portsmouth-Le Havre ferry costs a modest £20 for foot passengers if you take a midweek daytime sailing. You need not actually arrive on foot: the ferry company will let you take your bike free on the boat. Hope for a favourable breeze for the ride across the mouth of the Seine to the still-pretty fishing village.

## Ipswich to Ile de Ré

Even from East Anglia, motorists will find it *facile* to reach the small island that launches itself into the Atlantic from the intensely serene port of La Rochelle. A voyaging seagull, flying directly down from Suffolk on a straight-line route to the Ile de Ré would glide above the harbour of Newhaven. From here, a high-speed Stearn ship will whisk terrestrial travellers across to Dieppe in a couple of hours for £48, for a five-day, two-person trip. Migrating gulls and drivers would both do well to avoid Paris en route to the silvery island of sand dunes and marshes, speckled with a few trees. The terrain, you may conclude, is remarkably similar to Suffolk, but the coast is punctuated with a few more nudist beaches.



## Kidderminster to Kayserberg

To travel from the carpet capital of Worcestershire to the village whose biggest boast is as the birthplace of Albert Schweitzer is, surprisingly, a piece of *patisserie*: take a train to Birmingham airport to connect with the Crossair flight to Basel (£217). Basel, of course, is a Swiss city. But a geo-political wrinkle places its airport firmly on the French side of the border, with a land corridor to the Swiss city that gives it the name. When you leave the airport, you choose whether to enter French or Swiss territory. Choose France, take the bus into Mulhouse and a train onwards to Colmar; Kayserberg is on the outskirts.

where you find bus 320 to Biggin Hill International Airport. The Kent airport's sole scheduled service is on Love Air to Le Touquet, fare £135. After a short hop, walk from the airport to the geriatrically glamorous resort in 15 minutes.

## Manchester to Menton

A British Airways Boeing 737 has flown between Manchester and Nice for many summers. But this year, the flight has turned into a charter. When BA decided to cut the link to the south of France, the tour operator Unijet took it over. So starting on May 24, Mancunian rugby fans can make tracks to Menton easily for £219; just take the train from Nice to the final resting place of William Webb Ellis, who departed for the great scrum in the sky from Menton.

## Newcastle to Nancy

Brussels intervenes again for Tyneside travellers to Lorraine. Hull to Zeebrugge on P&O North Sea Ferries (£106 for a car and driver for five nights) cuts out much of the *motoring*, and provides free motorway driving through Belgium and Luxembourg – tolls begin only at the French frontier.

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# all consuming

## Under the Counter Chic to cheek

I'm seriously thinking of investing in a pair of very dark glasses in order to survive the next few months. Harmful UV rays I can cope with, but there is one sight which everyone should be protected from: Summed up in three little letters, it is the summer sin: VPL.

VPL, or "visible panty line", is a phenomenon that appears as soon as spring has sprung. It rises with the sap at the merest hint of sunshine. It manifests itself most commonly at weddings, office parties, and even on prime-time television. A recent *Blind Date* contestant was a textbook example. The lovely lad may not have liked the cut of her jib, but most of Britain saw the cut of her knicks as she waddled up Cilla's stairs to the losers' dressing room. His relief at not picking her was palpable - so was mine.

I have no sympathy for anyone suffering from VPL. This is, after all, a self-imposed affliction. Don't these people look in the mirror? Or is it the fault of complacent/well-meaning/scared partners, who to the much-voiced "I look fat in this, don't I?", reply "of course you don't, my darling", every time.

I have never been a fan of squeeze-me-quick Lycra below the waist, so VPL was not a personal challenge - that is, until this year's January sales, when I fell for a pair of skin-tight, indigo, boot-cut Sportmax trousers. They were reduced from £169 to £53, so I just had to have them. The assistant rather cunningly reassured me that no, I didn't look fat in them and yes, they were supposed to be that tight, and she had processed my Visa card and lovingly wrapped my brand-new purchase in tissue, before I'd even had time to consider my panty line options.

The ensuing evening gave me a new complex to mix and

match with my new treads. I spent a great deal of time in Hennes, selecting a suitable, fine g-string with which to slide into this Lycra garment, and, as this shop is such incredible value, was forced to buy a slinky Wonderbra-style bikini as well. Tops and bottoms are sold separately, so I thought, what the hell, I'll get some g-string bottoms while I'm at it - nice to have a sun-kissed behind.

I thought my other half would have been unable to contain himself, as I gave him a pre-bedtime fashion show. But when it came to the (Pamela-Anderson-eat-your-heart-out) g-string bikini, he hesitated, then shook his head, saying no, this was really 18-year-old-wait gear. I haven't yet got over the fact that he doesn't think I possess the body of an 18-year-old wait. At least I can wear my g-string under my Sportmax boot-legs, and strip off to reveal it in the gym locker-room, in the certain knowledge that most of the fat old birds in there would turn up to board meetings wearing only this piece of dental floss, if they had buttocks like mine.

There is no excuse for revealing your panty line to the world. There are solutions - be they g-strings, trouser briefs, control-top tights, or simply no knickers at all. Before you RSVP for your VIP party, get to the mirror ASAP, and check out that VPL. In case there is any doubt, your reflected rear should remind you of two smooth Cox's orange pippins, not a beach ball tied tightly with string.

Smoothies to get intimate with: LOGG microfibre g-string, £4.99, from H&M (Hennes), 261-271 Regent Street, London W1; Lycra and polyester "trouser knickers" with minimiser knicker-line and seam-free rear, £7, from Marks & Spencer.

Lindsay Calder

## Go on, cook it yourself

Help is at hand for the lazy: fast food need no longer be depressing, writes Caroline Singer

It's no secret that, while our appetite for cookery programmes and glossy recipe books is at an all-time high, as a nation we are cooking less and less. TV chefs entertain more than they inform, and the inevitable books-of-the-series end up as coffee table décor. Part of the fascination of Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's *TV Dinners* is that he's managed to find real people who take time to concoct complicated gourmet meals in their own homes. But for the vast majority, where cooking's concerned, it's often less hassle just to watch.

Food companies know this only too well. Even if we do like to cook "proper" meals, there's not always time. Arriving home exhausted and hungry rarely induces a burning desire to spend the evening slicing, dicing and marinating, so convenience food is a fact of life. But the "ping" of a microwave is a depressing sound. Few would say, hand on heart, that scalding hot, oversalted sludge sliding out of a plastic tub is their idea of a treat, and there is that slightly sheepish feeling that comes with eating something so far removed from the hands-on experience - are all those lovely Le Creuset pots just for decoration?

This is where *CTV* - "cook it yourself" - makes its grand entrance. It takes away the hassle of preparation and planning without removing the sense of cooking a proper, balanced meal from scratch. Bigham's Global Gastronomy, which is pioneering the concept, seems to be carving a new niche in the packaged food market. The idea is simple. You are given the raw ingredients in separate sachets, all chopped, marinated and ready to use. By following the instructions you can have a plate of gourmet food in 20 minutes flat.

Breast of chicken in a spicy Cajun marinade with a mango and coriander salsa, and sautéed Scottish venison with mustard, boney and juniper in a cranberry and fresh thyme sauce, are just two of the meals that can be whipped up. Nothing is pre-cooked, defrosted from frozen or pumped with preservatives. There's no waste, no shopping around for cranberries and creamed coconut, and emphatically no white plastic tubs with "pierce here" on their



Out of the frying pan: gourmet food in twenty minutes flat

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW BURMAN

lids. This is real food, made easy. Charlie Bigham, an ex-art consultant and self-confessed foodie, is the brains behind Bigham's Global Gastronomy. He is enthusiastic about the concept, which, he says "came to me as I negotiated the Iran/Pakistan border". The "global" element is inspired by his expeditions to far-flung regions of the world. "I saw simple, delicious food being cooked up with the minimum of fuss on the streets," he recalls, "and I wanted to try to capture some of the convenience and freshness of this type of cooking, and remove some of the mystique that surrounds, say, a Caribbean dish."

Charlie believes that the great strength of English cuisine is its eclecticism. "Unlike countries with a country culinary tradition, such as France or Italy, we have no sacred cows here any more, which is very refreshing. An Italian chef would never think of using Thai spices and

coconut, whereas over here, people like Alastair Little never stop experimenting and combining the flavours of other cultures."

It all sounds wonderful, but how does it taste? I decided to invite a few carnivorous friends for Bangkok chicken in south-east Asian spices with coconut and cashew sauce, and sautéed Scottish venison and zesty Caribbean lamb in a lime and ginger marinade (vegetarian options are in the pipeline). It certainly seemed to be food I would happily serve to guests at a dinner party, as well as being something I could treat myself to on a Monday night in front of the telly. And maybe, for once, I wouldn't emerge from the kitchen hot, irritable and bothered, trailing the faint smell of singed martyr.

Practicalities first. The stylish brown cardboard packs come in single or double portions, and meals work out at around £5 a head. They keep for up to a week in the fridge,

and I noticed - eco-skinflint that I am - that the little plastic sauce pots are just about strong enough to reuse. There are four separate components to each of the gastronomic self-assembly kits: a bag of rice or new potatoes; a bag of carrots; peeled and halved leeks, chopped, or green beans topped and tailed; a pot of sauce; and a pouch of marinated chunks of meat. Plus a page of instructions.

I began cooking about an hour before my guests were due to arrive. As we would be trying out three different dishes, a little planning was required, but next time I'll serve just one variety, giving me time to make a crème brûlée, wax my legs, watch *EastEnders*, and greet my guests with a serene smile.

Timing is crucial element to cooking, and Global Gastronomy takes all the guesswork out of it. The instructions that come with each pack are so easy to follow that I

almost felt lost when I had to put the cheese and biscuits out without friendly advice. They tell you exactly when to put the rice on for it to be ready just as the meat has cooked through and the carrots are at their peak of *al dente* perfection. The smells are quite wonderful.

And the flavours are even better. The meat was uniformly tender and beautifully marinated. I have never bitten into a piece of British lamb and tasted lime and ginger before, but it was an inspired and inspiring combination, which I plan to do again. The coconut and cashew sauce was aromatic, sweet and creamy, while the chicken itself had a hint of spice that balanced the flavours perfectly. The mustardy venison was, again, extremely tender, although some felt the marinade was a little too peppery.

Opinions were divided as to which was the best dish. I think the Bangkok Chicken won, but only just. The other two meals had strong support, too, and we all felt we had eaten inventive, interesting, high-quality food that was light years away from anything we'd had out of a packet before. Global Gastronomy meals are outstanding value, and a welcome addition to the otherwise gloomy world of instant grub. Look forward to the vegetarian options, and to seeing the distribution go nationwide, which it is set to do in the near future.

Finally, a last word for those purists who like to feel they've worked hard for their dinner party: with "cook it yourself" there's still the washing up to do. Global Gastronomy may be short-cut cooking, but what a wonderful way to cheat.

Bigham's Global Gastronomy is available from quality delis, Harvey Nichols, Fortnum and Mason, Purvis and Cullens. It is also available (from April) from Waitrose supermarkets and the home delivery supermarket The Food Ferry (0171-498 0827). The cost of a meal for one varies between £4.95 at Cullens and £5.95 at Harvey Nichols. A meal for two costs between £7.95 in Cullens and £8.95 in Harvey Nichols. Further information: call or fax Charlie Bigham (0181-337 2530) or Caroline Singer (0181-379 1082).

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# If you really wanna put some spice into fashion

World domination continues as the Spice Girls put their name to a range of clothes. By Melanie Rickey

They've done everything else, so it seems only natural that the Spice Girls should consider putting their name to a range of clothes - one for each style-setting Spice, of course. What else is there for them to do? They appeared on Clive James Show last Sunday. News at Ten's "and finally..." slot on Monday, the Big Breakfast every morning. The Spice Girls TV. Radio airplay for their latest single is constant, and the tabloids are Spice crazy. Add to that the possibility of a Spice film (in the style of the Monkees films) and Spice Girl Dolls and we could be heading for a Spice back-lash. Heaven forbid.

The clothing range won't be on sale until early next year when the band embarks upon their world tour (if indeed it goes into production at all). By then not only will impressive five-year-olds be the core customer base, but "Baby Spice" could be a Gucci-clad "Vamp Spice" and

"Scary Spice" a Dolce & Gabbana'd "Tiger Spice" (just think what £3 million in earnings could do to your taste in clothes). What's more the range will catapult their street cred to Mars. Who wears the Neighbours range of clothes? Zoe Ball's range? Exactly. In reality the Spice look is available on the high street, because it existed before the Spices had sung their first zizzzha, and is available to all women to interpret in any way they please.

The Spices and the high street are well matched. Even last October at the British Fashion Awards, the girls performed their second single "I'll Be There" on the catwalk when the prize for Best High Street Retailer was awarded to Oasis. On those grounds one could almost go so far as to attribute a high street store to each girl. But, today's stores have diversified and aim to cater to as many women and girls as possible. Kookai's customers, for example are not targeted by age, but more by their fashion



knowledge and attitude. Some stores have noticed the Spice influence is having a direct affect on sales to their core customers. Warehouse believes the Spice's have encouraged fashion conscious girls into being more daring with trends. Their target customers are 20- to 30-year-old women who are independent, urban, and earn their own money.

Recently, the store has been selling out of their camouflage print mesh dresses and tops - like the one's Mel B wears. They believe The Spice Girls have helped young women understand the way to wear fashion because instead of seeing clothes on stick thin models on magazine pages, they are seeing them on an all-singing, all-dancing role model.

A recent example of Spice fashion power is the Union Jack dress Geri wore

at The Brit Awards. Since it was splashed across TV and countless newspapers the company who designed the dress, Lipsy, have renamed it The Geri Dress. And it has consequently sold out from their Top Shop concessions up and down the country. Pictured left, they have offered a dress to the first thirty Independent readers who respond by post (with the assurance that for popular consumption the dress will be a few inches longer).



Send postcards to Geri Dress Competition, c/o Lipsy, 71 Mortimer Street, London W1N 7DF. Include your home address, a contact number and dress size.

## SPORTY SPICE

Sportsman track-pants, £29.99; white three-stripe T-shirt, £19.99 and blue-and-white shell toe trainers, £44.99, all by Adidas. Available from Cobra Sports, 172 Oxford Street and stores nationwide; enquires 0171-637 0903.

## BABY SPICE

Pink velvet A-line 'Tilly' dress, £28; green and lilac optical print shirt, £28; baby pink clips and sunglasses also available. All from Top Shop, Oxford Circus, London W1 and stores nationwide; enquires 0171-291 2351; white platform trainers, £79.90, available from Buffalo (see Scary)

## POSH SPICE

Burnt orange jacket, £150; matching belted skirt, £59.95, suit also available in blue and green, from Karen Millen, 17 Neal Street, London, WC2 and branches nationwide; enquires 01622 664032. Black satin Ultra bra, £18.99, from Gossard, available at department stores nationwide. Black mock-croc patent knee-high boots, £120, from Ravel, branches nationwide. Enquires 0171-631 0224.

## GINGER SPICE

Purple two-part asymmetric dress, £59, from Kookai, 123 Kensington High Street, W8 and branches nationwide; enquires 0171-937 4411. Black patent platform wedge mules, £19.99, from Shoe Express, branches nationwide; enquires 0500 192192.

## SCARY SPICE

Chocolate brown string-tie cropped halter top, £14; leopard print bikini top, £18; leopard print shorts, £15; beige loose-fit military trousers, £40 all available from Warehouse, 63-67 High Street Kensington, London W8 and one of their 75 nationwide stores; call 0171 278 3491 for your local stockist. Leopard skin super-elevated

trainer/boots, £99.90, from Buffalo, 59 Kings Road and 56 Neal Street, Covent Garden, London WC2; enquires and specific mail order enquiries 0171-379 1051, or check their Internet site on <http://www.buffalo/boots.com> which features an on-line catalogue, and a mail order service.



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## Midland's banking on it

Adwatch by Meg Carter

Midland Bank is changing its spots. Or, to be more accurate, its logo. Out goes the familiar golden griffin on navy blue; in comes a hexagonal symbol in red on white. What better time, then, to spend £20m on a rebranding campaign?

Midland's new advertising strategy broke last week with a return to its old "listening bank" theme, made familiar by successive campaigns throughout the Seventies and Eighties. However, the tone and style of Midland's new TV ads is unlike anything the bank has ever done before.

Three new commercials, created by the advertising agency St Luke's, parody action adventure movies in the tradition of *Mission Impossible*. Bank staff are seen risking life and limb - diving out of planes and into water, scrambling along the top of trains - to respond to customers' demands.

Each ad starts with a complaint overheard by a Midland employee who - after high drama and derring-do - deals with it. It's a far cry from Mid-

land's last campaign, which featured everyday people singing along their bopes and fears to familiar pop tunes. While the old campaign successfully conveyed the emotional values of the Midland brand, it did not go far enough in selling Midland as an active "doer". Peter Godfrey, the general marketing manager for Midland Bank, explains: "A rethink was called for. After detailed consultation with bank staff and customers, a radical new approach was agreed."

"We decided to focus on what customers really want: a very simple product which they can easily understand. In financial services, the majority of advertising is warm and empathetic. Midland's approach has moved on - to become more action oriented. In essence, if the customer asks for something, within reason - we'll do it."

It's a grand claim. And one that Godfrey is in no doubt the bank will be able to honour. For the new advertising approach has come from a root-and-branch review of ser-

vices, he explains. "We have listened to customer complaints and addressed them, changing products where necessary and adding services."

Midland hopes its new approach will both build loyalty amongst existing customers, and lure new business away from rivals. The bank is currently the fourth biggest in the UK, with 4.5 million current account holders - a total of 7.8 million customers when other services are added in.

"It's an attempt to move away from the perceived complacency associated with banks in the past," says Neil Henderson, account director at St Luke's. "The listening bank is a tremendous positioning in the market, but one that has not been to the fore in recent campaigns. While the last one did a wonderful job in making Midland personal at a time when others appeared pompous, the new campaign is a declaration that Midland has moved on."

Undoubtedly, a simplified and impactful approach seems the best strategy for financial services battling to win con-

sumers who are easily bored and confused by their wares, and facing new competition from the self-proclaimed kings of Nineties service culture: the supermarkets.

But will Midland's grand new scheme be complicated by its simultaneous rebranding strategy? The timing of the two is coincidental rather than planned. The rebranding was instigated by Midland's parent, the banking and financial services giant HSBC, to harmonise its operations in 75 countries around the world.

Godfrey, however, denies that dropping the griffin in

favour of a red and white hexagon represents much of a risk. "So far, we've had very little customer response at all," he claims. "Besides, it offers a welcome opportunity to draw a line under the old and bring in the new."

What effect the strategy will have remains to be seen. Immediate reaction from Midland customers is muted, as Godfrey suggests. "It's all very exciting, but I'm not sure how all of this directly relates to me," said one retired customer from south London. "When that becomes clear, I'll make my mind up."

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# It's goodbye to Mini-malism

buyer; if a car is small, it should be cheap. That means paltry profits for its maker unless the car sells in vast numbers, and the reward is

has gone, just like that of the bubble car before it. The Mini has been reduced to a nostalgia-tinged irrelevance, and soon it will die. Note its departure well, for we shall not see its like again.

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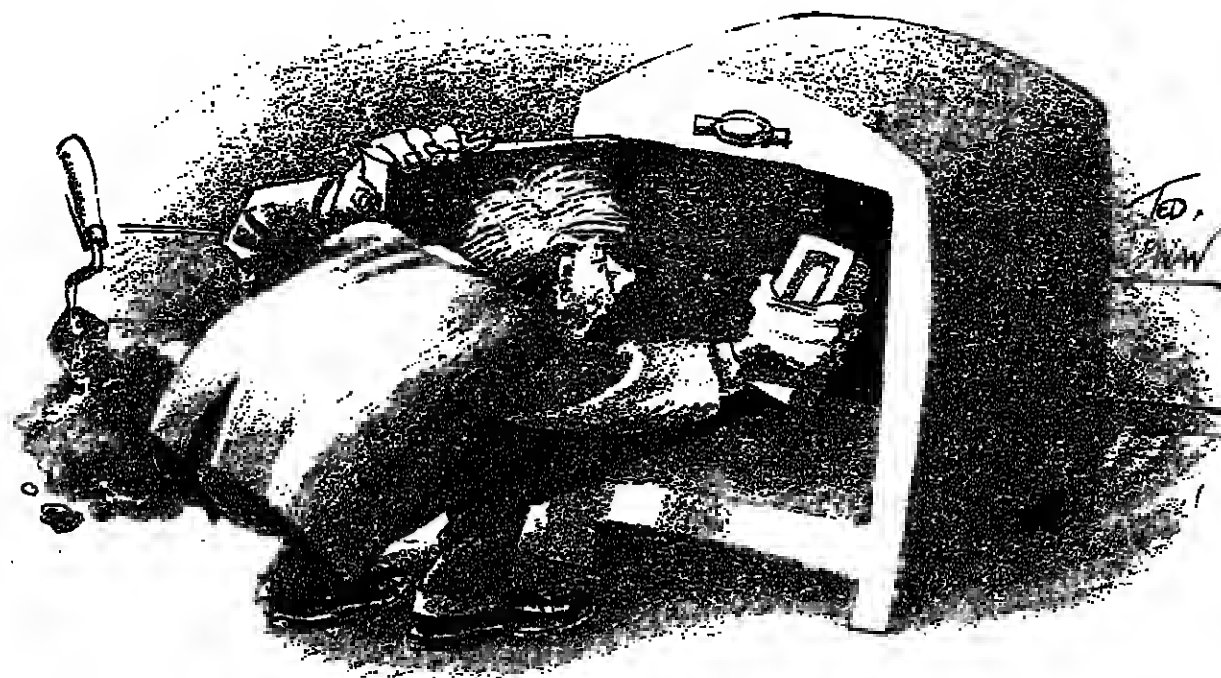
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# Property is hot again

Rachel Fixsen reports on how not to get your fingers burnt



Anyone with negative equity will guffaw at the term "property as an investment". For real belly laughs it is second only to the old chestnut "safe as houses". But things look very different in the property market these days. Residential property prices are forecast to leap by up to 12 per cent this year after an 8.8 per cent rise last year. Commercial property has also picked up. Should you take a fresh look at the property market as a way of boosting your savings, or does it still have too many drawbacks?

Buying units in a property unit trust lets you reap any benefits of a rising market, but dodge many of the pitfalls of direct investment in bricks and mortar. "Anyone can buy a small shop and let it out, but it is paved with stupendous difficulties for the small investor and carries a very high risk," says Peter Smith, regional director of independent financial advisers Hill Martin. Trying to let and manage a property on

your own could prove a nightmare. Another serious problem with buying a building as an investment is that it is illiquid - which means it is hard to turn it back into cash quickly if you need to. There may be no immediate buyer for that particular property.

Valuation is a further obstacle for property as an investment. Valuing the share of a listed company is easy, because you can compare it to the thousands of identical sales made each day. But property valuations can turn out to be hopelessly wrong. They are no more than somebody's opinion of what a building might fetch.

With a property unit trust, on the other hand, you can sell your units for cash at any time. And they are simply worth a proportion of valuations of the trust's underlying properties. Unless the trust ran into serious difficulties, it would not actually have to sell its assets to give you your money back.

Barclays Unicorn and Norwich Union

Trust Managers both run authorised property unit trusts.

The Barclays Unicorn trust holds 80 per cent of its assets in property, mostly offices and shops with some retail warehousing and industrial buildings. The other 20 per cent is held in property shares and other liquid assets.

John Kelly, investment director of the Barclays Unicorn trust, admits the UK property market still has its black spots. "There are still some valuations that are 20 per cent less than at the height of the Eighties," he says.

But all buildings are not the same. "As long as you have a reasonable location

and a flexible building structure, you're seeing relatively good growth." A flexible office building structure could be easily adapted to accommodate a certain type of technology, for example.

Mr Kelly says Unicorn property trust should yield between 10 and 12 per cent this year, with between 6 and 8 per cent coming from rental income, and the rest from capital growth. You can invest upwards of £1,000 in the Barclays Unicorn property trust.

Norwich Union's unit trust, which has a slightly higher proportion of liquid assets, has the same minimum investment. A new breed of quoted property unit

trust is due to be launched this summer. Hopes are high that this new investment vehicle could breathe new life into the commercial property market, by increasing liquidity. You could also invest in property indirectly by buying shares in companies which manage property. Share prices in this sector have shot up in the last few months.

Ray Jones, property analyst at stockbroker UBS, says shares in property firms outperformed the broader stock market by 10 per cent in 1996, on the back of stabilisation of the direct property market at the end of 1995.

Property shares produced an average

return including dividends of more than 28 per cent in the last year, according to Salomon Brothers' UK property securities index. Capital Shopping Centres would have given a massive 75 per cent return.

Mr Jones sees a steady trend towards growth for property shares in general. But there are areas where shares will do better than this. Companies owning central London offices, particularly in the West End, and firms with large regional shopping centres are poised for above average returns, he says.

British Land, Capital Shopping Centres, Chelsfield and Pillar Property Investments are four which still look good value, according to Mr Jones.

Property is often seen as an "anti-cyclical" investment, meaning it goes against the grain of the prevailing economic trend. So if you're betting on a bad year for stocks, particularly given the looming general election, property could be a good safe haven for your money.

But investing in property is largely for the well-heeled. Equities offer a much more suitable deal for those with an investment portfolio of less than £100,000, advisers say. "It's just less flexible," says Roger Harris of independent financial advisers Roger Harris & Co. "Property unit trusts can be sold fairly easily, but there's always the possibility of delaying any sale." He adds that a delay could be up to six months.

Charges levied on property unit trusts can sometimes be quite high, Mr Harris says. This is largely due to the cost of managing properties.

And some are dubious that the property market recovery is as solid as is often proclaimed.

"I think it is a chastening walk through the City of London... I'm staggered at the number of completely obsolete properties which are dark and shuttered," warns Mr Smith.

## American tips worth noting

Analysis of tipsheets shows that many positively harm their readers' wealth. Such titles can be a profitable business, but can they be of profit to investors?

Can investors hope to make any money out of following stock market tipsheets? We do not have a great tradition in this country of tipsters offering share tips through newsletters, as they do in the United States.

There is a big business, with literally hundreds of titles, so much so that the market is able to support a newsletter, *Hulbert's Financial Digest*, which does nothing else but analyse the performance of other investment newsletters.

Although a few (such as those produced by Martin Zweig) are excellent, well-researched publications as good as anything on Wall Street, many of the American newsletters are very poor quality indeed, produced by individuals with few qualifications and little experience to back up their advice. Careful analysis by Mr Hulbert over many years has shown that only a handful of titles consistently offer advice which is profitable to investors.

More precisely, while many newsletters inevitably pick some winning individual stocks, anyone who followed all the advice that the tipsters have offered would be unlikely to have made any money from the exercise. On average, the number of dud recommendations greatly outweighs the tips which have come good, very much as happens with racing tipsters.

Some - perhaps most - are positively harmful to their readers' wealth, but this does not stop them promoting themselves assiduously with promises of great gains ahead - often based on the most extraordinarily selective accounts of their past performance.



Jonathan Davis

How do they get away with it? The US Supreme Court, no less, ruled in a landmark case in 1985 that even amateurs who produce newsletters are in effect exempt from the Investment Advisors Act, and therefore from regulation. The First Amendment, the court decided, provides them with the right to peddle their tips, whatever their track record. The principle of *caveat emptor* - or buyer beware - remains, in the great American tradition, splendidly sacrosanct.

Such a *laissez-faire* regime seems unlikely to catch on here, where the tradition of regulation is entrenched, and the law/regulatory system goes to huge - and frequently futile - lengths to protect individuals from their own capacity for financial folly.

One of the longest surviving - and perhaps the best known - pure tipsheet in the UK is the *Fleet Street Letter*. This has had a chequered history over the years, but has the distinction of being the vehicle through which two millionaire businessmen - Nigel Wray (the rescuer of Saracens rugby club) and Michael Green (the boss of Carlton

Communications) - first obtained a quotation on the London stock market. In the right hands a successful newsletter can become a very profitable business indeed.

What we do have in this country is a fairly long tradition of tipping shares in newspapers. How good are they? Mike Mitchell has had the bright idea of analysing the performances of tipsters, tracking all the individual tips made by specialist newsletters and in national newspapers - and seeing how they performed subsequently. His findings, which he publishes as a regular newsletter of his own called *Tiptrucker* (0181-747 9497), make for interesting reading.

Apart from the usual problems involved in measuring performance - many tipsters are notoriously good at hedging their bets, making it hard to pin down what they are saying - two things are clear from his analysis.

One is that the newspaper tipsters, by and large, fare less well at picking stocks than the best specialist newsletters. (An honourable mention here to Quentin Lumsden, for many years a columnist on the *Independent on Sunday*, who also produces two newsletters, *Chart Breakout* and *Quantum Leap*, which both have shown a strong recent track record in spotting small company growth stocks.)

The second - and perhaps more surprising - finding in Mr Mitchell's analysis is that there do appear to be one or two specialist titles which do, on recent evidence, have rather good track records at spotting winners. Apart from Mr Lumsden's titles, he particularly rates the performance of *Analyst*, a monthly publication

produced by a former stockbroker, Jeremy Utton, and a team of other former broking analysts.

I can vouch for the fact that *Analyst* is a serious and well-regarded title which attempts to apply rigorous investment appraisal techniques to the task of picking smaller company growth stocks. Mr Utton has a relatively conservative investment approach, and the style and pricing of the publication (£97.50 for new subscribers, £120 a year thereafter) marks it out as a cut above the "heard it in a pub" style of tipsheet further down the market.

How good is it? Well, last year, according to *Tiptrucker*, the 51 shares tipped by *Analyst* produced an overall gain of 18.9 per cent, which compares with a 12.9 per cent gain on the FTSE All share index. (But note that the analysis takes no account of dividends, which add a further 3 to 4 per cent a year to the total return on the market.)

Most tipsters prefer to trawl among smaller quoted companies, which have little or nothing to show by way of dividend. Of *Analyst*'s tips last year, just over one in three produced gains of more than 30 per cent. At least three stocks doubled during the year. But 21 tips failed to show any gain at all. Is a two-to-five ratio of losers to winners good or bad?

Clearly, nobody should expect a ticket to riches for just £120 a year. But the better publications, such as *Analyst*, can be valuable additions to the investor's armoury. Anyone who thinks, however, that they are going to get rich solely by following tips in a newsletter - as thousands of Americans apparently do - obviously needs to think again.

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## Collect to invest: John Windsor finds Buddhist art enlightening

South Ken's specialist, Nader Rasti, says:

The auction of excavated goods is forbidden. And at those auctions there is scarcely a bronze Buddha to be seen. Good news or bad? In fact, almost all China's surviving bronze Buddhas, of which infinitely fewer were made than pottery wares, are in the West - beyond the

PHOTOGRAPH: PETER MACDIARMID

Remaining above ground, those that were not sold off in the late 19th century were lost in wars, destroyed or stolen by the Japanese invaders of 1939 or discarded during the Cultural Revolution of 1968-78, when it was illegal to own art. No Buddhas in China means no Buddha market there.

"When the new rich Chinese have bought their big houses and cars they will revert to their old pattern, bear down upon the West and suck back all their cultural goods. A lot of people here are not aware how fast people in China are making money. All Chinese art is going to be very expensive."

All that is lacking is the liberal granting by the Chinese authorities of foreign tourist visas - decreed in principle last November, Chinese wanting to travel abroad endure interminable interviews. Few visas are granted. Yes, the Chinese are coming. But at the moment some of them are having a little difficulty.

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**Brian Tora**

Back from Cheltenham, the City is now placing bets for after the election

seems unlikely. Also, so far as both sterling and the market are concerned, if people are nervous, why are we not seeing selling pressure now?

It is not too difficult to answer that last question—at least as far as share prices are concerned. We know from recent surveys and from the problems faced by some fund managers such as FDFM that institutional liquidity is reasonably high. With positive cashflows continuing, there is plenty of money *overhanging* the market. This situation will be exaggerated further by the windfall issues of shares in building societies and insurance companies as they give up their mutual status. There are plenty of potential buyers out there.

So where does the money go? Construction has traditionally been a fruitful sector to back under a Labour administration. Spending money on infrastructure projects is a

quick way of creating employment and kick-starting the economy – as if it really needs it.

Then, of course, we can expect some redistribution of wealth, so the less well off may have more money to spend. This could be good news for retailers like Kingfisher, though perhaps the knock-on effect will not extend as far as Harrods. Also, some other leisure sectors may benefit, such as breweries, particularly if they have holiday interests as well, as Scottish & Newcastle do with Centre Parcs.

There will be sectors to avoid, of course. Utilities stand out, given the declared intent to levy both a windfall tax and to tighten regulation. But this has already been well signalled and may have been factored in the price. Railway operators could fall into this situation, although there are doubtless efficient gains still to be made following privatisation.

Then again, given the increasing difficulty that many of us are finding in spotting the difference between Labour and Tory policies, perhaps we can just continue as we are. But that wouldn't be good for business in the City, would it?

*Brian Tora is chairman of the investment strategy committee at Greig Middleton, stockbroker (0171 362 4000)*

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# Nothing ventured, no tax gained

Nic Cicutti on the advantages and pitfalls of investing in Venture Capital Trusts

**T**ax avoidance is a sport often favoured by those who earn so much money that they could probably afford to donate a few pounds to the Inland Revenue. But if you don't have to hand the taxman a chunk of your savings, why should you? Especially when there are ways of avoiding tax and making even more money at the same time. This is where Venture Capital Trusts (VCTs) come in.

VCTs, introduced by the Government two years ago, are similar to investment trusts. Their aim is to promote investment in relatively small, unquoted companies. Companies that qualify for investment must not be quoted on any stock market, except the Alternative Investment Market (AIM).

The beauty of VCTs is that, compared to investment trusts focusing on smaller companies, subscribers for new ordinary shares in the trust receive income tax relief at 20 per cent, as long as they are held for at least five years. In effect, a £100,000 investment costs £80,000. Income from the trust itself is tax-free, plus all gains at disposal. Furthermore, if shares are bought with the proceeds from the sale of an existing asset which may be liable to capital gains tax (CGT), this will allow the investor the right to "roll-over relief" – deferring payment of tax – on the asset.

While all capital gains made in the trust itself are tax-free, minimising those transferred into

it involves selling the trust at a time when other losses can offset the original gain. Or, funds can be dribbled out after five years, up to the investor's annual CGT exemption.

Minimum investment in some trusts is just £3,000. The maximum investment against which full tax relief can be claimed is £100,000 per tax year. It is possible to invest in more than one trust, with tax relief applying to the combined investment. To receive the 20 per cent tax relief, shareholders must send the tax certificate they receive from the VCT company to the Inland Revenue. If the trust is sold within five years, the tax relief granted is repayable. There are also stringent criteria as to the qualifying areas trusts can invest in.

The question remains: which VCTs should investors be looking at? Last year, 12 trusts raised more than £160m and, according to the Aaron Partnership, a firm of financial advisers based in Milton Keynes, 10 of these are raising more money. David Aaron, a senior partner, says the key factor in picking the right trust is the experience of the manager investing in the smaller companies. Managers should also be in a position to choose between – and reject the majority of – deals offered to them.

Mr Aaron says: "Avoid companies that invest in too many start-up ventures because these have much higher risks. It is wise to spread the risk over three or four trusts.

Choose the larger trusts for most of your investment, as they will give a bigger spread."

For investors who are prepared to accept high risks in return for potentially high returns, the Aaron Partnership recommends Guinness Flight and Murray Venture Trust VCTs.

The first is managed by Guinness Mahon Development Capital Flight, which has a proven record in unquoted company investments. From March 1984 to December 1995, GMDC achieved a compound return on realised investments of 39 per cent a year.

Murray Venture Trust VCT is managed by Murray Johnstone, which also has a long history of investing in small and medium-sized companies. Its management team places £1m a month in firms selected from hundreds of offers received.

Also recommended is British Smaller Companies VCT, a regional fund manager. Managed by Yorkshire Fund Managers, the firm has 10 years' experience in the sector and has consistently figured in the top quartile within its sector.

More conservative investors are pointed towards the Enterprise VCT and Close Brothers Protected VCT.

Both have 50 per cent of their assets guaranteed by big street banks, Enterprise additionally has 25 per cent of its funds invested in gilts.



Building from nothing: Start-ups may mean high risks PHOTOGRAPH BY EDWARD SYKES

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# Get me out of this debt trap

Case study: Philippa Gee advises a mother of three

**NAME:** Patricia Olver  
**DATE OF BIRTH:** 5-4-1949  
**OCCUPATION:** Administration manager  
**BACKGROUND:** Patricia is a single parent, with three children, Tara, Sophie and John, living in Berkshire. The last two are still financially dependent on her. She earns £17,500 per year and receives an additional £1,000 a month maintenance for the children from her former husband. Patricia has a £30,000 interest-only mortgage, which is due to expire in 2011, backed by an endowment policy with Standard Life. She is paying off a number of debts, including a substantial credit card debt, plus home improvement and car loans. She has had a personal pension for the past seven years, into which she pays £210 a month.

**THE AIM:** Patricia is currently spending up to her income limit and wishes to manage her finances better, decreasing balances on her credit cards. She would also be interested in a better mortgage deal. Maintenance payments will halve in a year's time when Sophie leaves university, and Patricia wants to sort out her affairs to cope with this future loss of income. She also wants to set aside some £3,000 in savings and is relatively risk-averse.

**THE ADVISER:** Philippa Gee, a director of Gee & Co. fee-based financial planner

in Shrewsbury, Shropshire (01743 236982).

**THE ADVICE:** The interest rates paid on the majority of your debts are excessive and should be immediately reduced. Equally, you have a variable interest rate mortgage and are exposed to potential rate rises. Total payments on your borrowings are currently in excess of £664 per month.

To remedy these concerns, I recommend you apply for a remortgage of £45,000 to cover all existing debts. You should lock into a competitive rate, fixed over a number of years. Nationwide currently offers 6.5 per cent fixed for two years. Your monthly costs would be reduced by nearly £450 to a more manageable initial level of £219.

As well as reducing outgoings dramatically, this would give you a known monthly cost to allow you to control your expenditure more. Although this will help solve a lot of your short-term concerns, you should avoid additional borrowing in the future.

The existing mortgage endowment and family bond could repay the proposed new level of mortgage, although the progress of these should be monitored.

The endowment policy is still held in joint names and if you are to be the sole owner of this, Standard Life should be contacted to arrange completion of the relevant paperwork. The endowment is set

to mature three years after the repayment date for your existing mortgage and therefore the new mortgage should be based on a slightly longer term to cover this.

We can now turn our attention to your other requirements. You realise that you will not be able to retire until age 65 or later. Based upon your existing provision (assuming contributions continue) and fund performance you could find yourself with a pension of approximately £12,000 or more in today's terms. In addition, you will receive the state pension from age 60.

Another concern is the absence of any savings. You would like to set aside a minimum of £3,000. As you appear to respond better to a strict savings mechanism rather than putting away whatever is left at the end of each month, I suggest a standing order to deduct a set amount every month.

You say that £100 could be saved each month. Together with the £450 released from your borrowings, you will quickly reach £3,000. This then allows you to consider other investments. I suggest either the Cheltenham & Gloucester 30-day notice postal account, currently paying 5.5 per cent gross, or the Scarborough Building Society instant access postal account currently paying 6 per cent gross.

Once this "float" has been set up, you should look each year to see how much



Patricia Olver wanted to decrease her credit card balances and set aside some savings  
PHOTOGRAPH: MARTYN HAYHOW

that it is likely the children will find work during this period and will therefore be able to provide towards the costs of living at home. I suggest this need, if any, is met from the cash savings you will build up.

Additional life cover is not essential although as you are self-reliant you should consider the financial effects of ill health. You already have income protection and can easily add on to your pension a "waiver" costing around £11 per month, allowing your premiums to be maintained if you were unable to work after a six-month deferment period.

Although quite costly, critical illness cover is also worth consideration. This provides a lump sum on diagnosis of a number of serious illnesses. If we set the contract to cease at age 65, a monthly premium of £50 could provide cover of between £50,000 and £75,000, depending on cover preferred. You should also ensure that your will is promptly rewritten.

**THE VERDICT:** "I thought the advice was brilliant. I was very impressed with the way Philippa took a difficult problem, that of several debts at high interest rates and came up with a creative solution. The thought of remortgaging for more than at present was not something I had considered. Philippa's approach was extremely efficient and helpful."



John Whiting

It's the end of the tax year, and time to make a resolution to give the Revenue less

The year-end is nigh. No, you've not been asleep since Christmas - it's the tax year-end that we are heading for. Traditionally, this is the moment to take stock of one's fiscal affairs - and perhaps make a few resolutions for next year.

The resolution most of us would like to make is to give the taxman less of what he craves for. Assuming you don't want to take the drastic step of earning less, there are ways to reduce the amount you contribute to the ever-open coffers of the Inland Revenue. Many are simple family fiscal housekeeping measures.

The key point to remember is that everyone has a personal allowance - £4,045 for the coming tax year - which is the tax-free amount every man, woman and child can have. Then income tax starts to bite - the first £4,100 of taxable income is at the 20 per cent rate before the individual moves on to the 23 per cent and later the 40 per cent rate.

So is there scope for you to share income with your spouse if he or she doesn't earn - or earns very little? Two obvious possibilities (assuming the wife is the non-earner) is to let her hold any investments or deposit accounts and so get the interest. Or look at employing her or taking her into the business if the husband is self-employed or has his own small company.

The same principles work if it's the husband who is the low or nil-earner, with the added point of looking at the married couple's allowance (MCA). That is only worth around £274 a year now, but it is still worth having and it goes automatically to the husband unless the couple do something about it. It can be split or passed to the wife. The unmarried may be able to claim the additional personal allowance if there are children - this is worth the same as the MCA and again can be split in the best way.

And what of children's tax position? They too have their personal allowances, although any income which comes from an asset gifted by a parent is taxed on the parent if it exceeds £100 per annum. Mind you, other family members are not caught by this, so perhaps Granny can help and give them some income-producing assets? (Giving the kids loads of money now may not be what you want, so you may wish to refer back to a previous article in this series on trusts.)

In all cases, bear in mind that the non-taxpayer can

register to get interest income gross rather than with tax deducted. Well worth getting the form from the building society, rather than trying to do a tax return.

Turning to Capital Gains Tax (CGT), similar principles apply of splitting holdings with your spouse. Then, could you "bed and breakfast" some shares to use up your annual exemption this year and give yourself a better base value for the future?

If you're lucky enough to have some share options, look carefully at their position - could you usefully exercise some now and realise gains in this tax year rather than next? (But make sure the profit will count as capital and not give rise to an income tax charge - some options will and that could ruin some careful planning.)

If we're into pre-year-end mode, don't forget inheritance tax. If you have it in mind to give assets away, consider making a gift before 5 April 1997 if you haven't yet utilised your gift exemption of £3,000. And company car drivers should check whether that April business trip should fall before or after 5 April.

There is also a range of tax-free investments that you can go for, though many are not available to the children. These are well known: the interest you receive will be tax free if you leave it in the account for five years. PEPs are very much in vogue: they give a tax-free environment for your shares and bonds. They still carry risks and costs, of course, but they can work as part of long term saving - perhaps earmarked for school fees? There is an annual PEP amount available - £6,000 for the basic PEP. Then there are National Savings opportunities available for all. We'll survey all this in a future article.

Don't forget the greatest tax shelter - pensions. Whatever changes might happen in the future, contributions now to approved schemes are tax deductible. There are limits to what you can toss in - typically 17.5 per cent of earnings, though the older (and here "older" can start at 36) can contribute more. If you have a personal pension scheme, check that you are making the most of the relief available. If you are in your employer's scheme there may still be scope for additional contributions.

John Whiting is tax partner at Price Waterhouse

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## A good degree and a £20,000 debt

That's what today's sixth-formers can look forward to. Abigail Montrose and Ken Welsby report

When the parents of today's teenagers went to university, thoughts about money usually meant simply the grant – and how to make it last until the end of term.

If the cash ran out a couple of weeks before the vacation, there was always the chance of a couple of nights' work in the union bar – and of course a quick phone call home would often produce at least a modest cheque.

Today it's a different story. The value of the grant is shrinking – and many families on average incomes are shocked to discover that their children will no longer qualify for more than a nominal grant, if any.

To make matters worse, there is the growing fear that at least some universities may start to introduce tuition fees.

If you have a child who is now in the lower sixth, be aware that the prospectuses for September 1998 entry to six leading institutions – Oxford, Cambridge, Durham, Nottingham and Bristol universities and the London School of Economics – include a "wealth warning".

In effect, they are saying to students and their parents: "We don't know if

the Government will let us charge – but if it does, we probably will. If you won't be able to pay, don't bother applying."

The Committee of Vice-Chancellors – in effect university managing directors – are generally in favour of tuition fees. But Sir Ron Dearing, chairman of the Higher Education Funding Council, who is advising the government on the issue, has not yet committed himself in public. The truth is that there is still no clear idea of how student finances will work beyond the next couple of years.

But whether tuition fees arrive or not, the education world is unanimous in the view that higher education costs are rising – and that students and their families will have to foot a bigger share of the bill. As one admissions tutor put it this week: "The only sensible advice for parents is to plan for the worst."

Around 40 per cent of students have part-time jobs during term-time, and many more work every vacation. Yet 87 per cent of students still get into debt.

Increasingly, parents have to contribute to the cost of higher education. But what are the costs – and how much help can you expect from the Government?

At present students receive two forms of support from the state. The local education authority (LEA) will pay tuition fees to the institution and a maintenance grant direct to students to cover all their expenses.

The maintenance grant is means-tested and is based on the income of the parents. In the case of mature students, it is the individual and his or her partner to whom the means test is applied.

The maximum grant is £2,150 a year for students in London and £1,710 a year elsewhere. The means test operates broadly on the same lines as welfare benefits; it allows for household and family expenditure, and classes the remainder as residual income. If the parents have a joint residual income of £16,050 or more, the grant is reduced.

To supplement this, student loans are available. The maximum loan is £2,035 for students in London and £1,645 for students studying elsewhere.

The National Union of Students estimates that the minimum a student living away from home can survive on living in London is around £5,200 a year, and outside London the figure is £4,300. So even if a student received a full grant and the maximum loan, there would still be a shortfall.

In fact, many students do not qualify for the maximum grant, and many find their living expenses, which include accommodation, food, books and travel, exceed the NUS minimum.

If the maintenance grant system is scrapped, as many expect it will be in the future, Barclays Bank estimates that the average student would owe £20,625 by the end of a three-year degree course.

Many would be put off going on to further education if they thought they would have to borrow this amount.

Increasingly parents are funding their children's education without expecting repayment. If the maintenance grant scheme is to be further reduced or even scrapped, parents may well need to start saving several years in advance.



The union bar: An extra expense on top of the estimated £6,000 a year cost for a student in a London hall of residence PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW BURMAN

## Lay a nest-egg offshore

The issue of private education remains divisive – but many parents who opt for state education for their children at primary and secondary levels will be called upon to contribute to the cost of their university or college education.

Estimates of the likely bill for a university education vary widely, since the future funding of higher education is in the melting pot – but as an indication, the National Union of Students calculates that it costs a student £5,410 a year to live in a London hall of residence, and a figure of £6,000 would be realistic to cover the cost of books, meals and travel. Tuition fees, if they are introduced, would be several thousand more.

The challenge, then, for parents, is to find ways of covering such costs without breaking the bank. One unconventional but highly tax-efficient means of providing for such sums is to invest offshore.

This does not involve numbered accounts in secretive Swiss banks, or laundering money through tiny islands in the Caribbean. The reality is much more prosaic, and involves investment funds based in such decidedly unexotic locations as Luxembourg and Dublin.

Although unregulated by the UK

Tony Lyons finds a tax-efficient strategy that doesn't involve Swiss banks

authorities, so long as the investment is in an offshore subsidiary of one of the well-known fund management groups or life assurance companies, there will be little more risk to capital than with most other kinds of investment in managed funds.

Some offshore funds in fact put their money back into the UK. Edinburgh-based Murray Johnstone, for example, operates a fund which buys bonds and fixed-interest stock issued by banks with triple-A credit ratings – among the safest investments available.

Investing offshore in this way, a sizeable fund can be created for the payment of school fees or higher education costs.

While the charges are slightly higher than their mainland equivalents, because of their tax-free status the performance should more than compensate for this.

Offshore management groups invest free of UK income and capital gains

tax. This means that they can invest tax free with the gains and income being reinvested to make the fund grow faster.

Individuals who invest offshore usually do so in roll-up funds, so called because the earnings are rolled up year after year, and drawn only when the investment is cashed.

The investors only become liable to income tax on the gains at the time of encashment – and even then, there are ways in which the tax liability can be minimised.

There are a couple of main methods of investing money offshore to pay for education, which apply equally to school fees or higher education costs.

If you are planning to pay fees some years ahead, the most straightforward means is investment in one of the many offshore funds now on offer. The investor faces a vast choice, everything from UK equities to Latin American specialists and currency funds.

A number of the leading management groups offer umbrella funds where investors face just one set of charges. They then have a choice of sub-funds to invest in, between which they can usually switch freely.

A typical example is Guinness Flight's International Accumulation Fund, launched in 1980, that has 14

sub-funds including a range of currency and bond funds as well as international and European equity funds.

The investment can then be cashed in as needed. Investors should note that they will be liable to income tax on any gains and will not benefit from the UK indexation rules on them. But if the encashment is on a phased basis to pay for school fees, the tax liability can be minimised.

Use of offshore funds can be particularly useful in providing money for children going to university. A parent or grandparent can set up a trust offshore in a child's name which will pay an allowance after their 18 birthday.

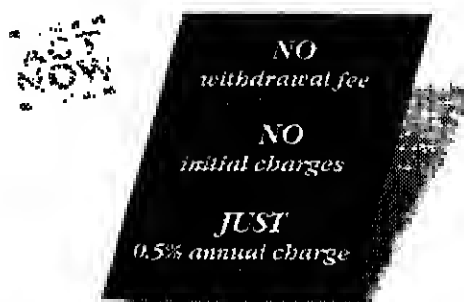
As the student is unlikely to have any other income, and taking advantage of the tax allowances, a significant proportion of the money can be received virtually tax-free.

Another method of using offshore investments is for low-rate taxpayers who need to pay school fees immediately and have a significant lump sum. They can buy an offshore annuity which will pay the costs of schooling and other expenses each term.

As annuity rates are continually fluctuating, an independent adviser with a knowledge of offshore annuities will be able to advise on how much is needed to purchase such an annuity.

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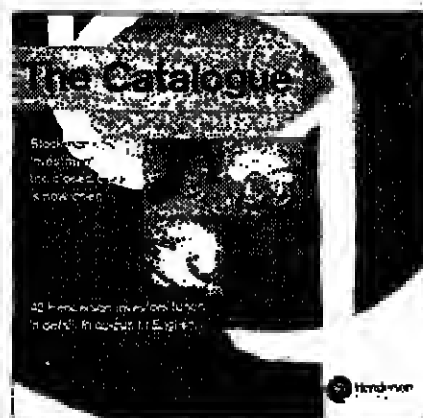


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# Public schooling assured

Tony Lyons works out the best policies to pay the fees

Parents considering educating their children privately need to be aware at the outset of the likely cost. Secondary schooling for just one child to the age of 16 could cost more than £30,000 as a day pupil – and at least double this if boarding is being considered. Only a few are lucky enough to have trust funds that they can use. Many have grandparents with sufficient capital to fund school fees.

Yet well over half the parents and guardians who privately educate their children pay the fees themselves. Anyone considering this route needs to plan carefully – both to ensure that the funds are in place and to minimise the impact on the family's overall finances.

While there are different means of saving for school fees, schemes that depend entirely on stock market performance, which can go up or down in value, can leave the investor with a shortfall. Life assurance still offers one of the most important means of paying for private education for children – and grandchildren.

Life assurance can be used to save for future or immediate school fees. The earlier a scheme is set up, the cheaper it will be – a number of independent financial advisers earn their livelihood from selling specialist school-fee packages.

The simplest use of life assurance for early planning is to use a charitable trust to invest a lump sum. Although this has lost some of its tax advantages, it still offers a guaranteed way of paying the fees on a term basis.

In effect, the capital is used to buy an annuity which pays the fees direct to the school. A sum of £20,000 could provide

around £30,000 worth of school fees over five years. Most people, however, do not have the £20,000 to invest. In this case a conventional with-profits endowment can provide the answer.

Many private schools now follow the state system and provide secondary education from 11 rather than 13, as is the case with the more traditional boys' schools – so you can plan ahead on the basis of a conventional 10-year endowment policy taken out before a child is one year old. This will then provide a lump sum when the child is 11.

The clever parent should use the proceeds of the policy to negotiate with the school to pay all the educational fees – at least to 16 – in one lump sum. Most schools will discount charges, or at the very least any future increases in their fees, if they are offered a one-off lump sum payment.

The benefits of conventional with-profits life assurance are twofold. Firstly, they offer generous life cover. Secondly, once declared, the annual bonus – expressed as a percentage of the sum assured – cannot be taken away or reduced. While these tend to be quite low, the bulk of the maturity value is the terminal bonus, paid to reflect the life office's performance over the whole period of the policy.

Even though the values of the terminal bonus on 10-year policies have fallen in recent years as inflation has come under control, it still forms a significant proportion of the maturity proceeds, usually over a third of the value.

Today, a 30-year-old paying £100 a month into a 10-year with-profits policy can expect a good life assurance company



The privileges some parents pay for: School fees for one child can cost upwards of £30,000

to forecast a maturity value in excess of £18,000. The actual value will depend on the performance of the underlying investments.

What of those who cannot plan ahead or decide for whatever reason to send a child to private school without any savings in advance? Paying fees out of income is very expensive.

There are ways of financing education by spreading the payments over the term of a life assurance policy or by taking out a mortgage.

usually arranged with a bank and are repaid with a 10-year with-profits life assurance policy taken out with one of the better-performing companies such as Friends Provident.

The borrower draws down the school fees each term from the bank. In return a monthly sum, dependent on age at the outset, is invested in an endowment policy that is used to

repay the loan after 10 years. Meanwhile, interest is paid on a preferential rate, usually a couple of points over the bank's base rate.

Monthly payments will therefore start quite low but would go on rising until the end of the school fees when they will stabilise. At the end of 10 years, the loan will be

repaid out of the policy's maturity value. Because life offices are conservative in their forecasts of future values, the borrower should find a small capital sum left over.

The earlier the planning for school fees, the cheaper it becomes. But even for those who do not plan ahead, life assurance can provide a means of spreading the cost.

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Tel (Home) \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
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### Some useful phone numbers

**IFA Promotion** 01179 711177  
Will give you details of three independent financial advisers in your area; ask for specialists in school fees and/or investments

**Barclays** 0800-374 373  
Free guide on the cost of putting children through higher education

**Dept of Education and Employment** 0171-510 0150  
Detailed information on student grants – including the means test rules – and loans

**ISIS** 0171-630 8793  
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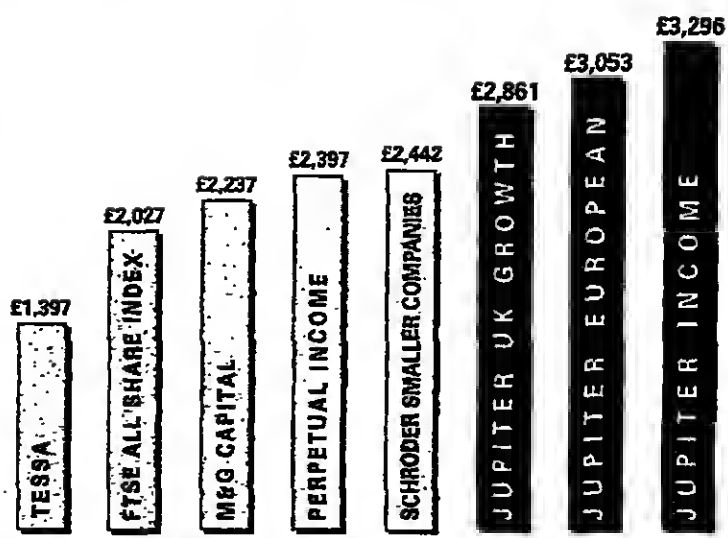
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\*Offer to bid, net income reinvested to 1.3.97. Source: Micropal.

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هكذا عن الأصل



TO FIND OUT WHAT'S ON TV, WHERE TO GO AND WHEN, READ THE EYE TODAY



Serena Mackesy  
In my week

Show me someone who hates smoking at parties and I'll show you someone who's never been to a really good party

There are those sublime moments when the world throws you the chance to use a line and you catch it, one-handed, without looking, and pluck it back. Okay, so it was a stolen line: Saint Sharon of the Stones said it first in *Diabolique*, but the satisfaction went deep. We were feeling a bit yawn because we'd just sat through *The Crucible*. David was having a wobble and we were standing on the stairs by the ash-tray waiting for him.

We were discussing Daniel Day-Lewis. His appearance had saved me from falling asleep altogether by inspiring an attack of the giggles. It's that Irish thing. It's gone beyond a joke. It's fine wanting to be Irish. I have occasional urges to dig out my old grandpa's birth certificate myself. Artists don't pay tax, the bars are great and they've got the coolest capital city in the world after Venice. But Dan's taken it beyond that: he's not content just with having the Nationality and developing a bit of a brogue; he is transforming himself into George Best. The similarity is getting stronger all the time: the scruffy beard, the bad haircuts, the highly-coloured nose. All the way through *The Crucible*, I kept expecting him to throw down his rake and shout: "For F\*\*\*'s sake bring me a bottle of whisky and the shortest for this year's Miss World."

Sam was going "Did you notice the miracle, by the way?" "No. What miracle?" "The teeth. Didn't you see? They kept changing. I mean, he had these nice, white, shiny English - sorry, Irish - middle-class teeth all the way through, and then when he got his soliloquy at the end they'd turned green and stumpy and he kept frothing through them."

"Yes, I did." "And then, when they hanged him, he'd got the old ones back. There wasn't a gob of spittle when he was saying the Our Father." "Well, you can't spit when you're praying." "It's amazing," said Sam. "Redemption as orthodontist."

I could have saved thousands of pounds on the boys' teeth.

"They'd have to sincerely repent first."

"Oh, they'd probably have done it like a shot if they'd thought it would make girls fancy them."

And then 'Taupé Woman came up. She had one of those "I've got children and I haven't got time for frivolity" haircuts, and an expression like someone who has just tried hundred-year eggs for the first time. "Excuse me," she said. "Mmm?" we turned to her. "Do you know what day this is?" she said. Sam

I mean, think about the kind of mind that could say "I know. We'll take a group of people who are counter-suggestive enough to light up while watching *ER*, and we'll invent a day dedicated to not doing one of their most pleasurable activities. They'll all want to join in because they won't want to be left out." Only a taupé person could think that a day posited on a negative could be a success. Days that work are based on positives: Armistice Day (promotion of peace); World Aids Day (promotion of the alleviation of suffering); International Women's Day (celebrating the existence of a superior species). Put "no" into a title and that's the reaction you get. I know half a dozen non-smokers who make a point of doing it on March 12.

'Taupé Woman and I stared at each other across the gulf of nothing-in-common. Everyone needs role models, and I suppose it's inevitable that someone, somewhere would choose Anne Diamond. Sam pushed her glasses up her nose, smiled, said nothing. David emerged from the boys' room, and 'Taupé Woman's husband walked out behind him, pulling a woolly scarf from a Sainsbury's carrier bag. "We'd better go," he said. "It's after 11 o'clock. What did you think of the film?" She followed him down the stairs. "Very good," she said. "And Daniel Day-Lewis was so convincing."

I said, "It's not a reliable method."

Year by year, National No Smoking Day has gone belly up in a cloud of nonentity and I've finally worked out why: it's because smoking is a taupé issue, not a health one. Show me someone who wants smoking banned in public places and I'll show you someone who has said to a colleague: "I'm really tired. We were up 'til one o'clock last night playing *Trivial Pursuit*." Show me someone who hates smoking at parties and I'll show you someone who's never been to a really good party.

I mean, think about the kind of mind that could say "I know. We'll take a group of people who are counter-suggestive enough to light up while watching *ER*, and we'll invent a day dedicated to not doing one of their most pleasurable activities. They'll all want to join in because they won't want to be left out." Only a taupé person could think that a day posited on a negative could be a success. Days that work are based on positives: Armistice Day (promotion of peace); World Aids Day (promotion of the alleviation of suffering); International Women's Day (celebrating the existence of a superior species). Put "no" into a title and that's the reaction you get. I know half a dozen non-smokers who make a point of doing it on March 12.

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## The (English) language barrier

You have to feel some sympathy for Patricia J Williams: arriving in Britain to deliver the Reith Lectures (Radio 4, Tuesday), supposedly one of the peaks of intellectual life in this country, she must have expected to be treated with respect, or at least simple courtesy. And what happens? First the tabloids, outraged by the notion of a black American woman lecturing on the politics of race, denounce her as a political extremist. Then she gets roughed up by Melvyn Bragg on *Start the Week* (admittedly, it was quite a mild beating by his standards - Jean Aitchison, last year's lecturer, really felt the rough side of his tongue, and not in a nice way - but Professor Williams seemed understandably disconcerted). And to add insult to injury, one of the "qualities" she is dismissed with is that she is a "dazzlingly sharp and amusing interviewee" in the run-up to his Reith Lectures a few years ago, when it came to the point, was rather dull.



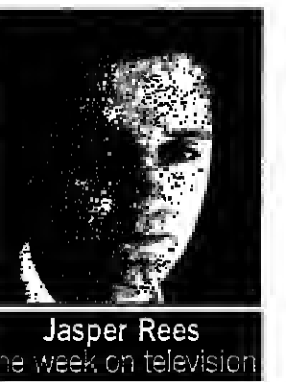
Robert Hanks  
the week on radio

So when she finally got to the starting-line, I was ready to root for her. And after three weeks, it's disappointing to have to admit that these lectures are really not very good. Actually, Reith Lectures hardly ever are very good; it's an extraordinarily difficult form to bring off successfully - even the geneticist Steve Jones, a dazzlingly sharp and amusing interviewee in the run-up to his Reith Lectures a few years ago, when it came to the point, was rather dull. But to the exigencies of form, you have to add some problems peculiar to Professor Williams. Too many of her sentences are either impenetrably dense or ungraspably vague - what precisely is "an assimilative tyranny of neutrality as self-erasure"? (Quick now, there's another sentence coming up. You don't get any time to think about this.) This is partly to do with the fact that her brand of English is subtly alien to English ears. In her first lecture, talking about her young son's apparent inability to identify colours, she said: "I began to suspect some social complication in which he somehow was invested." Invested? You see what she means: but it's an odd word to use, and at other points content doesn't supply you with enough information to make sense of the oddities.

The story about her son's supposed colourblindness (apparently, he'd just taken to heart the repeated insistence of white liberal teachers that "colour doesn't matter") also highlighted another problem: she is not a very good storyteller, stripping her illustrative anecdotes of circumstantial detail so that they feel that the media in this country have tried so hard to make her feel uncomfortable it's all the confirmation she needs.

## And the world laughs with you

There wasn't much evidence of the pulp in *Ballykissadee* (BBC1, Fri), last night's blind date between two primetime priests, but more than enough elsewhere in Comic Relief's order of service. The biannual task of the Red Nose Festivities is to find a satisfactory compromise between entertainment and consciousness-raising. The biannual task of columns such as this one is to express the worry, which may or may not be widely felt, that a grab-bag of Hancock and Deighton has no business parading a conscience that their daily work requires them to conceal.



Jasper Rees  
the week on television

There was a particularly monstrous example of this critical stance in another newspaper's review of the first instalment of *Balls to Africa* (BBC1, Sun, Mon, Tues). It imputed the basest of limelight-seeking motives to the messy mélange of celebrities assembled for a football tour of West Africa. They were described as "embarrassingly available" and "second-rate" by a reviewer the memory of whose witty radio stumwork has been all but eclipsed by the widely noted brevity of his own career in TV. How second-rate is "second-rate"? Better than having no rating at all.

In fact, the now established tradition of comedians reporting from the front line of deprivation is part of a much wider trend in TV. Celebrity involvement buys an audience for documentaries that would normally be given a wide berth. They may be about feeding the world or feeding the intellect (remember Terry Jones on the crusades?) but the same rules apply. It speaks far less well of the viewer than the viewer that this should be so. We're the invertebrates for needing to be led by the hand towards our own wallets, or our own enlightenment, by people who make us laugh.

a swarm of giggling "Africans", as the beneficiaries of our charity are generically known in this sort of film, and reckoned it was "great that they're doing gags". That summed up the almost childlike paucity of his world view, in which the punchline looms larger than the poverty line. But it was a welcome retreat from the holy know-all style of some previous Comic Relief films.

The tendency in Comic Relief programming to sentimentalise "Africans", with the help of slow-motion and plangent soundtracking, is not inflicted on "the homeless". Lenny Henry's brief in *Walk On By* (BBC1, Wed) was to present his street-sleeping subjects as individuals. Genetically programmed to be larger than life, he suppressed his own personality wherever loudness was inappropriate, but skillfully used it wherever possible to coax the personality out of others. In one scene, he helped Jason, a boy with a periodic heroin problem, to sell the very newspaper that carried this week's critique of Comic Relief's impure philanthropy. (In a rather choice irony, the punters all wanted him to autograph the front page.) Jason eventually felt familiar enough with Henry to admit that he always switched over when he was on.

Jason also took a camera crew to Canterbury to show them his childhood haunts. "Who'd want to film you?" a friend, passing by, asked incredulously. The glamour models on *Kilroy* (BBC1, Thurs) didn't have the answer to much the same question. Most of the women participating in this studio investigation into nude modelling were (thinking in terms of a future in TV presenting). However, television is a prudish medium. "I've got a degree," said one woman from under uniform white hair. "But I can't get a job as a presenter. Perhaps at Channel X, but not Carlton." So there we have it: rejected by the channel widely regarded as the lowest of terrestrial low, but granted a free screen test by *Kilroy*.

As an act of wholly inappropriate charity, it was matched only by the plug for a moribund pop group in *The Queen Phenomenon* (C4, Mon). Channel 4 ought to set up an inquiry to find out how this one managed to get through its defences. Perhaps it happened the day Michael Grade was handing in his resignation. MTV had presumably discarded it as insufficiently rigorous. The film was made by a rum-sounding pair called Rudi Dolezal and Hannes Rossacher. "Europeans". Who needs them?

### DAMIEN HURTS...and his painfully creative struggle

THIS IS WHAT I LOVE ABOUT LONDON: PASANDA. ITS NOT JUST THE COOLEST, HIPPIEST CITY IN THE WORLD

IT'S ALSO A PLACE OF UNSPOILT HISTORY AND TRADITION

D'YOU LIKE THE TONIC? IT'S A GALLIANO!

Neil Kerber

## Whatever happened to... Rock 'n' Roll

1957 Coffee houses, jukeboxes, jiving in swirling skirts, writhing and diving. The sexual follows the rock 'n' roll revolution as Britain shakes to the new sound. Freedom of expression: how to be young and active. Riots hail the first arrival of Bill Haley from the US on these shores. Forty years ago this month he was rocking around the clock to the

screams of a nation's eager young womanhood

Fight back From the black rhythm 'n' blues sounds shipped into Mersey the Beatles export back a new version. The US goes wild on their first tour in 1964. Being more famous than Jesus challenges a mere King (Elvis). They also have all the best tunes.

Pardon? However, by the 1967 *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* album they've gone from being nice young men in suits to hippies in huge floral print shirts. From being chippy and chirpy to choral and curious. Old-style rock 'n' roll seems to have disappeared. Groups bring out albums inspired by drugs and flower power culture.

Get real Into the 1970s, and we did. The gentle tones of California grooving turned to glam rock - all high heels and high notes - and punk.

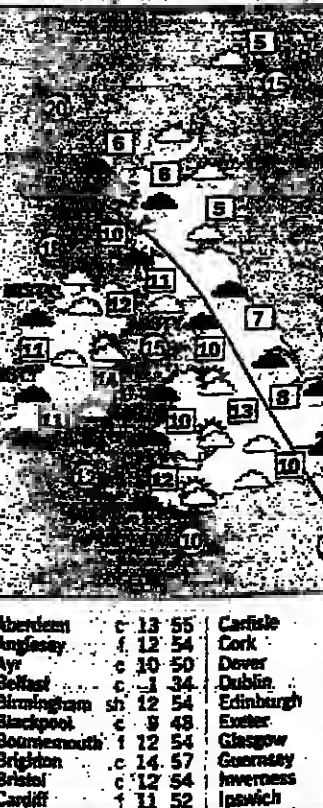
By the 1990s Rock is splintered into many factions: house, garage, ambient, jungle, rap. And that's just dance. Guitar-based rock has a collection of golden oldies at the helm. Next week.

Bill Haley's Comees perform in Berlin. The Beatles sold more records last year than ever before. Poetry, cookery, anything is the "new rock 'n' roll", but not music. Yet *The Daily Mail* recently spoke of "the insidious, amoral influence of much modern music". Rock 'n' roll must still be with us... but it helps if you are over 40.



James Aufenant

### WEATHER



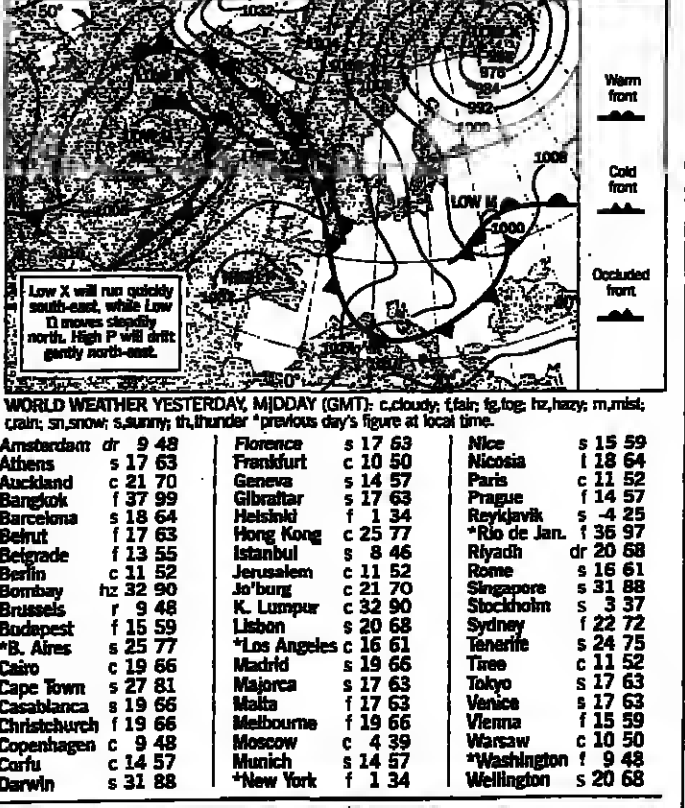
### The British Isles

#### General Situation and 5-Day Outlook:

Scotland and its islands will be cloudy with some places getting some rain, and it will be foggy over the hills. However, Shetland may well stay dry all day. Northern Ireland should get some hazy sunshine, but there will be a lot of cloud, and also some drizzle to the west. England and Wales will mostly cloudy with rain and drizzle while western hills are foggy, but the Midlands should get some hazy sunshine this afternoon.

Sunday will see a lot of cloudy, misty weather with rain to the north and drizzle to the west. However, central and eastern areas should get some warm hazy sunshine. More cloudy weather and rain is expected over northern Scotland during Monday and Tuesday. Elsewhere, it looks like being essentially dry with some sunshine, but there will be a lot of cloud drifting around. Showers are then likely to break out almost anywhere during Wednesday, while northern Scotland stays wet.

### Europe and The World



### AA Roadwatch

London. A306 Hammersmith Bridge. Closed both ways to general traffic for structural works. Expect congestion on both sides of the river.

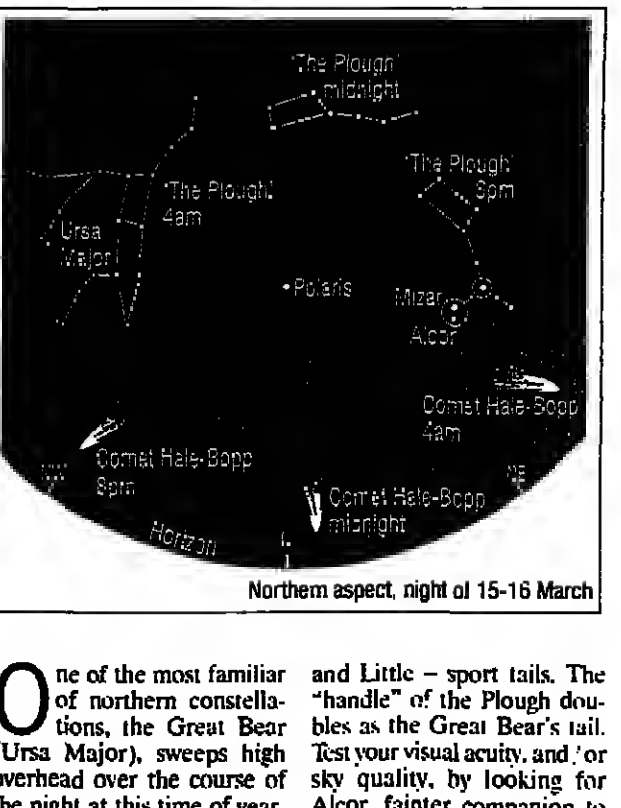
M112 Hendon area. Major roadworks at Five Ways Corner, with no access to or from the A1 Great North Way. Bored, M5 J18-19. Contrail on operation across the Avonmouth Bridge with a 50mph speed limit. Regular rush-hour delays.

West Midlands. A34. Major roadworks on Stratford Road, Spaxhill. No entry into Highgate Road. Regular delays expected.

M1 West Yorkshire. J47 Leeds (M62/A63 Holbeck), long-term roadworks with speed limits down to 30mph. Delays on the M1, M62 and Dewbury Road.

City of Edinburgh. M812. Major roadworks, with lane closures on the roundabout at J2 (Newbridge Spur). Greater Manchester. A6 Huddersfield. Roadworks northbound. Also M63 J10. Southbound entry slip closed. Time & Wear. A19 Moor Farm. Major roadworks. Expect queues.

### The Sky at Night



### Lighting Up Times

Today	Tomorrow
London 6:05pm to 6:12am	London 6:07pm to 6:10am
Belfast 6:13pm to 6:22am	Belfast 6:17pm to 6:20am
Manchester 6:12pm to 6:20am	Manchester 6:14pm to 6:17am
Cardiff 6:13pm to 6:21am	Cardiff 6:15pm to 6:18am
Newcastle 6:10pm to 6:18am	Newcastle 6:12pm to 6:15am
Glasgow 6:10pm to 6:18am	Glasgow 6:12pm to 6:15am
Belfast 6:13pm to 6:22am	Belfast 6:17pm to 6:20am

### Yesterday's Readings

NO <sub>2</sub>	SO <sub>2</sub>
London Good	Good
S. England Good	Good
Wales Good	Good
E. England Good	Good
N. England Good	Good
Scotland Good	Good
Ireland Good	Good

### Outlook for Today

NO <sub>2</sub>	SO <sub>2</sub>
London Good	Good
S. England Good	Good
Wales Good	Good
E. England Good	Good
N. England Good	Good
Scotland Good	Good
Ireland Good	Good

### High Tides

AM HT	PM HT
London 5:50 6:53 18:16 5:5	
Liverpool 3:18 4:25 15:47 3:2	
Aberdeen 1:16 2:16 13:31 1:2	
Hull (Humber) 10:33 6:7 22:01 6:6	
Greenock 4:29 5:24 15:49 3:3	
Dun Laoghaire 3:56 4:56 15:31 3:6	

### Sun and Moon

Sun rises 6:15am	Sun sets 6:05pm
Moon rises 10:02am	Moon sets 12:52am
Full moon: March 24	

### One of the most familiar

of northern constellations, the Great Bear (Ursa Major), sweeps high overhead over the course of the night at this time of year. The seven stars of the Plough (or Big Dipper) are just the brightest asterism in a constellation that sprawls over a much larger area. In a dark sky, you can see fainter stars outlining the bear's head and paws. Unlike real bears, the celestial species - both Great

### and Little - sport tails.

The "handle" of the Plough doubles as the Great Bear's tail. Test your visual acuity, and/or sky quality, by looking for Alcor, fainter companion to Mizar, next but last star in the Plough handle. Like the Great Bear, Comet Hale-Bopp is currently placed so it circles the pole and never sets for observers at UK latitudes, but it is easiest to see soon after dusk or just before dawn.

Jacqueline Mitton





## The big picture

### To Have and Have Not

Sat 4.40pm BBC2

Whereby the 19-year-old Lauren Bacall slouched across the big screen for the first time, as the New Yorker's Pauline Kael put it, "and managed to make the question 'Anybody got a match?' sound like the most insistent and insinuating of demands". Howard Hawks put the former cover girl in this hugely entertaining Humphrey Bogart adventure (set in Vichy-controlled Martinique) on the advice of his wife. The original story was by Ernest Hemingway, but the film is pure Warner's. A joy.

## Television preview

Recommended viewing this weekend  
by Gerard Gilbert

To call a cinema movie "stagey" is to denigrate it – the wrong-headed intrusion of one medium into another medium – and with so much television drama now shot like a movie, a stagey TV drama is – QED – a bad thing. And yet, stagey material – i.e. set-bound and borrowing theatrical conventions – is often what works best on television. Think of sitcoms: think of soap operas.

It helps, of course, when the material is as good as *My Night with Reg* (Sat BBC2), the latest in a so far exciting season of *Performance*. Kevin Elyot's moving and witty six-hander looks at the various machinations of a group of gay men, five of whom are either in love with (or have slept with) the eponymous but unseen Reg, who dies from AIDS. I'd call it a gay *Big Chill* if that didn't sound so po-faced and anyway miss the point entirely. *My Night with Reg* is informed by the gay experience of AIDS, but is not really about AIDS, but about friendship, treachery and the often cruel logic of love. The original West End cast – David Bamber (currently camping it up in *Chalk*), John Sessions, Anthony Califf, Joe Duttine, Roger Frost and

Kenneth MacDonald – are all intact and obviously very comfortable with the material. A treat.

Which is more than can be said of the join-the-dots adultery drama *Have Your Cake and Eat It* (Sat BBC1), whose opening episode has nothing remotely interesting to say on the subject. Griff Rhys-Jones looks like Miles Anderson is the errand husband, Holly Aird his mistress and Sinead Cusack the wife. Both hubby and his main squeeze work as designers of state-of-the-art amusement park attractions. So this four-parter (four parts) has already secured a nomination for the most clunking metaphor of 1997 – an extra-marital affair as a roller-coaster ride.

*Family Money* (Sun C4) is also in four parts, but at least I can imagine watching the second instalment. Adapted by Ruth Carter from Nina Baydon's novel, this stars Claire Bloom as an ageing widow who is sitting on a small fortune in unrealised real estate – a period end-of-terrace family house in some extremely desirable part of London. Who she receives a severe beating on the way back from her favourite restaurant, her children decide it's time she

downsized and started divesting some of her wealth. On to them, naturally.

It's a good weekend for documentaries. *The Call of the Sea* (Sat BBC2) will add to BBC2's growing reputation as purveyors of quality oral history. The old salts on display here come straight from central casting, with their beards, jaunty caps and rheumy, faraway eyes. The first film looks at the conflicting desires amongst the sailors for the sea and for a stable home life.

*A Night in with the Girls* (Sat & Sun BBC2) is a history of women in television, starting in the 1940s when women were either decorative props in *Light Entertainment* or concerning themselves with the four Cs (cooking, childcare, clothes and celebrities). *God Bless America* (Sun ITV) is a second series of the programme in which writers weave personal portraits of individual US cities. Crime writer Patricia Cornwell applies her eye for life's darker ironies to Richmond, Virginia, whose principal landmark, for her, is the city morgue. "An autopsy is without doubt the most detailed medical examination you will ever have."



## The big matches

Scotland v France  
Sat 2pm BBC1 & 2.45pm BBC2  
Wales v England  
Sat 3pm BBC1

The Bees are showing both matches in tandem – thanks to the hour's time difference with the Continent. The first half of France's attempt at the Grand Slam kicks off on BBC1 at 2pm, shifting, for its second half, to BBC2. The Cardiff Triple Crown, decided over the last five Nations outings for one of rugby's modern legends, Will Carling (above).

# Saturday television and radio

## BBC 1

7.00 *Harry and the Hendersons* (R/S)(T) (1415912).  
7.25 *News*, *Weather* (8364979).  
7.30 *Felix the Cat* (R/S) (3553202).  
7.45 *Phantom 2040* (R/S)(T) (8881196).  
8.10 *The Real Adventures of Jonny Quest* (5673776).  
8.35 *The Flintstones* (R) (5859399).  
9.00 *Live and Kicking* (S) (7867283).  
12.12 *Weather*, (7202134).  
12.15 *Grandstand*. Introduced by Steve Rider from Cardiff (7201405). 12.20 *Football Focus* (2928641). 1.00 *News* (81540825). 1.05 *Rugby Union*, the build-up to today's Five Nations Championship matches (3793863). 1.55 *Rugby Union*: France v Scotland. Live first-half coverage, kick-off at 2pm, from the Parc des Princes, Paris. The second half can be seen on BBC2 at 2.45pm. See *The big matches*, above (7989009). 2.45 *Rugby Union*: Wales v England. Live coverage from Cardiff Arms Park. Kick-off is at 3.00. See *The big matches*, above (7722848). 4.40 *Final Score* (3268844). 5.00 *Rugby Union*: France v Scotland. Second-half highlights (6931).  
5.30 *News*, *Weather* (7121283).  
5.40 *Regional News and Weather* (101196).  
5.45 *Dad's Army* (R/S)(T) (892979).  
6.15 *The New Adventures of Superman* (S) (476283).  
7.00 *Noel's New York House Party*. Noel Edmonds swaps Crinkley Bottom for a New York apartment, which gives him the opportunity to cosy up to the likes of David Hasselhoff, Tyne Daly, William Shatner and Barry Manilow. Joan Rivers, meanwhile, receives a Gotcha at a bogus art exhibition (S) (235009).  
7.50 *The National Lottery*. Dale Winton announces Britain's Eurovision entry, while Whitney Houston shows off her latest single (S/T) (7498251).  
8.10 *Crime Time*. Another mildly enjoyable yarn for Michael French and Chloë Annett's time-travelling coppers. This week, a fashion designer is receiving death threats (S/T) (309028).  
9.00 *News and Sport*, *Weather* (7108822).  
9.20 *Have Your Cake and Eat It*. See *Preview*, above (S) (33848).  
10.15 *They Think It's All Over*. Highlights of the second series of the comedy sports quiz (S) (158047).  
10.45 *Match of the Day*. Nottingham Forest v Liverpool is the projected main event (S/T) (5805689).  
11.50 *Chalk* (S/T) (R) (338600).  
12.20 *Top of the Pops* (R/S)(T) (6902697).  
12.50 *The Bride in Black* (James Goldstone 1990 US). Daytime soap star Susan Lucci plays a woman whose husband is shot outside the church on her wedding day. It turns out, natch, that her fiancé had a murky past. David Soul helps out in this join-the-dots thriller (T) (5974968).  
2.20 *Weather* (8186679). To 2.25am.  
REGIONS: Sat 9.20pm *Mind the Gap*. The Old Course. 9.50 *Have Your Cake and Eat It*. 10.45 *Sportscene* – Match of the Day. 11.50 *They Think It's All Over*. 12.20 *Chalk*. 12.50 *Top of the Pops*.

## BBC 2

6.20 *Open University*. Maarten Van Heemskerck: Humanism and Pieter Bruegel (120250). 6.45 *Drifting Continents* (6938009). 7.10 *Lifestyles*. Work and the Family (9764660). 8.00 *Open Saturday* (S) (421318).  
10.30 *Magic Town* (William A Wellman 1947 US). Interesting Capra-esque fable (it was penned by Capra's regular scriptwriter, Robert Riskin) in which a small town which exactly reflects national opinions and sets out to exploit it. Local newspaper editor Jane Wyman tries to thwart him (T) (16053825).  
12.10 *Film 97* with Barry Norman. Bazza looks at *The English Patient*, as we all will no doubt have to at some stage (R/S)(T) (2518134).  
12.40 *ES* Doran (Howard Hawks 1967 US). Underrated to some, plain old tried and true Hawksian western shenanigans to others – this stars John Wayne, broad of girth and sluggish of movement, as a cowboy who helps clean up drunken sheriff Robert Mitchum so that together they can beat off the badasses (T) (38327432).  
2.45 *International Rugby Union France v Scotland*. Live second-half coverage from the Parc des Princes, Paris. Commentary by Bill McLaren and Gavin Hastings (S) (4228680).  
3.30 *The Car's the Star* (R) (8187912).  
3.50 *The Saint*. Peter "Jason King" Wyngarde guest-stars in this episode of the glam 1960s Simon Templar yarns. Roger Moore stars (9798196).  
4.40 *To Have and Have Not* (Howard Hawks 1944 US). See *The big picture*, above (T) (280115).  
6.15 *Travels With Pevsner*. New architectural series which uses Nikolaus Pevsner's classic guide, *The Buildings of England*, as a starting point for a series of six English counties. Richard, Dan Cruickshank on the buildings of Norfolk (223028).  
7.05 *News and Sport*, *Weather* (7108822).  
7.20 *Correspondent*. Andrew Jeffrey returns to Angola to come to terms with a horrific accident on an oil rig nearly two decades ago, which left him paralysed. Tim Whewell reports from Svalbard, in the former Soviet republic of Belarus, where the first AIDS case was discovered six months ago and where now one person in 70 tests HIV positive (S/T) (338844).  
8.10 *Call of the Sea*. See *Preview*, above (T) (684221).  
8.50 *Til Death Us Do Part*. An episode from 1974 finds Dandy Nichols' "silly moo" heading off to Australia to tend to her sick sister (R) (312080).  
9.20 *A Night in with the Girls*. See *Preview*, above (S/T) (604931).  
10.10 *Performance: My Night with Reg*. See *Preview*, above (S/T) (309486).  
11.55 *Windows on the World*. Ian McGarry's film of the performance of young Irish composer Patrick Cassidy's cantata based on one of Ireland's best-loved legends, *The Children of Lir*. Recorded in 13th-century St Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin, with the Tallis Chamber Choir and the Irish Sinfonietta, conducted by Philip Simms (S) (409554).  
12.50 *Global VideoByte*. Top of the pops in Taiwan, Mali, Germany, Sweden, Morocco and Egypt (Then *Weatherview*) (3140784). To 1.15am.

## ITV/London

6.00 GMTV: 6.00 *News*. 6.10 *Professor Bubble*. 6.30 *Banana in Pyjamas*. 6.50 *Big Alert* 7.15 *Dragonfly*. 7.45 *Disney's Wipe Out in the Wild Room*. 8.55 *Power Rangers Zeo* (5858202).  
9.25 *Scratchy and Co* (S) (2405022).  
11.30 *The Chart Show* (S) (32598).  
12.30 *Love Bites*. Ant and Dec guest in the show. (S) (32598).  
1.00 *News*, *Weather* (7108822).  
1.05 *London Weekend Today* (T) (8156759).  
1.10 *UEFA Champions' League Special*. Preview of the quarter-final second-leg matches being played this Wednesday (88984806).  
1.40 *Sturmstrasse* (R) (1625009).  
2.05 *ES* Doran (Howard Hawks 1967 US). Underrated to some, plain old tried and true Hawksian western shenanigans to others – this stars John Wayne, broad of girth and sluggish of movement, as a cowboy who helps clean up drunken sheriff Robert Mitchum so that together they can beat off the badasses (T) (38327432).  
2.45 *International Rugby Union France v Scotland*. Live second-half coverage from the Parc des Princes, Paris. Commentary by Bill McLaren and Gavin Hastings (S) (4228680).  
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7.05 *News and Sport*, *Weather* (7108822).  
7.20 *Correspondent*. Andrew Jeffrey returns to Angola to come to terms with a horrific accident on an oil rig nearly two decades ago, which left him paralysed. Tim Whewell reports from Svalbard, in the former Soviet republic of Belarus, where the first AIDS case was discovered six months ago and where now one person in 70 tests HIV positive (S/T) (338844).  
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12.50 *Global VideoByte*. Top of the pops in Taiwan, Mali, Germany, Sweden, Morocco and Egypt (Then *Weatherview*) (3140784). To 1.15am.

## Channel 4

6.00 *Sesame Street* (R) (29912).  
7.00 *Dumb and Dumber* (35486).  
7.30 *Dennis* (R) (354912).  
7.45 *First Edition* (R) (3541467).  
8.00 *Transworld Sport* (S) (1202).  
9.00 *Morning Line* (S) (58599).  
10.00 *Gazzetta Football Italia* (4405).  
11.00 *NBA 24/7*. Mark Webster meets Shaquille O'Neal, one of the NBA's all-time great players, in his LA apartment (S) (23641).  
12.00 *Lamb's Tales*. Film-maker Amanda Baxter visits a farm in the Cumbrian mountains during the lambing season (R/S)(T) (8861573).  
12.40 *Channel 4 Racing*. From Leicester, Derek Thompson introduces the 1.25, 1.15, 1.50 and 2.25 races (S) (40022860).  
2.45 *Humoresque* (Jean Negulesco 1946 US). Joan Crawford, in the second, post-Mildred Pierce, stage of her movie career, plays the patroness of rising violinist John Garfield (dubbed by Isaac Stern). A stinking Wagner melodrama with Clifford Odets dialogue so unflatteringly camp that it ought to join the scouts (T) (16539860).  
5.05 *Brookside Omnibus* (R/S)(T) (2882912).  
6.30 *Right to Reply* (S/T) (573).  
7.00 *A Week in Politics* (S) (4660).  
8.00 *The Golden Age*. Stern-eyed Mary Goldring investigates fat racing, an industry in which prize money is insufficient to give owners a reasonable return. The demands of the betting industry keep ill-frequented racetracks open, there are new bloodstock technologies that nobody wants, and there is no considered plan for the future. That's telling them (S/T) (4680).  
9.00 *Last Chance Lottery*. Usher stand-up Patrick Kielty and his team look at the odds of winning the lottery. The programme looks at those odd people who live just across the English Channel. Tonight's programme travels to Amsterdam for the annual Cannabis Cup, and meets aspiring pop directors in France. Plus Michael Winner's verdict on Europe's first drug queen restaurant (R/S) (5157).  
10.00 *Eurotrash*. Antoine de Jean-Paul front this raucous magazine show looking at those odd people who live just across the English Channel. Tonight's programme travels to Amsterdam for the annual Cannabis Cup, and meets aspiring pop directors in France. Plus Michael Winner's verdict on Europe's first drug queen restaurant (R/S) (5157).  
10.30 *Channel 4 News*.  
11.35 *Hill Street Blues*. Two desperate young Puerto Ricans take hostages during a hold-up (R/T) (14502).  
12.35 *The Client*. Ho-hum drama series based on John Grisham's best-selling thriller. Momma Love's (R/S) (5157).  
1.30 *The Gelfin Show*. Guests include the Spice Girls – we, heh. Don't they ever rest? (S) (9900264).  
2.05 *Ricki Lake* (R/S)(T) (8088326).  
2.50 *Beavis and Butt-Head* (R/S) (517216).  
3.15 *Flava* (R/S) (517217).  
3.45 *Bless This House* (R/S) (98448).  
4.15 *Film Night*. Janice Forsyth looks at Miles Forman's new film, *The People vs Larry Flynt* (R/S) (54516).  
4.45 *The Best Specials*. The Red Hot Chili Peppers in concert (R) (968054). To 5.00am.

## ITV/Regions

**AMERICA**  
As London except: 12.30pm *Movies*, *Games and Videos* (89912). 1.05 *Regional News* (8156759). 1.40 *Worship* (2249009). 2.15 *Baywatch* (8784776). 3.10 *Film: Carry On Sergeant* (7768573). 5.05 *Anglia News*. Sport (1425468). 12.05 *Film: Into Thin Air* (355852). 1.50 *Camel Knowledge* (3475500). 2.45 *Film: Gold and the Barbarians* (115210). 4.15 *Sound Bites* (3589479). 4.35-5.30am *Funny Bunker* (6543448).  
**CELTIC**  
As London except: 12.30pm *Premiere* (99912). 1.05 *Central News* (8156759). 1.40 *Movies*, *Games and Videos* (11635860). 2.10 *Film: Son of Faber* (761405). 3.50 *Soundbite* (8517863). 5.05 *Central News* (950115). 5.10 *Central Match*. *Centre Extra* (1484202). 6.10 *Journalist* (1122500). 5.20-5.30am *Asian Eye* (8194887).  
**ITV WALES**  
As London except: 12.30pm *Movies*, *Games and Videos* (89912). 1.05 *ITV Wales News* (8156759). 1.40 *Shutters* (7894554). 2.30 *World of Wonder* (8981844). 2.55 *Arrest* (3662283). 3.10 *Baywatch* (8784776). 3.50 *ITV Wales News and Sports Results* (1425405). 12.05 *Film: Into Thin Air* (355852). 1.50 *Camel Knowledge* (3475500). 2.45 *Film: Gold and the Barbarians* (115210). 4.15 *Sound Bites* (3589479). 4.35-5.30am *Funny Bunker* (6543448).  
**ITV WEST**  
As London except: 12.30pm *Pier Pressure* (99912). 1.05 *Midland News* (8156759). 1.40 *Movies*, *Games and Videos* (2249009). 2.15 *Baywatch* (8784776). 3.10 *Film: Carry On Sergeant* (7768573). 5.05 *Midland News* (1425405). 12.05 *Film: Into Thin Air* (355852). 1.50 *Camel Knowledge* (3475500). 2.45 *Film: Gold and the Barbarians* (115210). 4.15 *Sound Bites* (3589479). 4.35-5.30am *Funny Bunker* (6543448).  
**WESTCOUNTRY**  
As London except: 12.30pm *Movies*, *Games and Videos* (89912). 1.05 *Westcountry News* (8156759). 1.40 *Planet Rock Profiles* (11635860). 2.10 *Shutters* (7894554). 2.50 *Arrest* (3662283). 3.10 *Baywatch* (8784776). 3.50 *Westcountry News and Sports Results* (1425405). 12.05 *Film: Into Thin Air* (355852). 1.50 *Camel Knowledge* (3475500). 2.45 *Film: Gold and the Barbarians* (115210). 4.15 *Sound Bites* (3589479). 4.35-5.30am *Funny Bunker* (6543448).  
**YORKSHIRE**  
As London except: 12.30pm *Movies*, *Games and Videos* (89912). 1.05 *Yorkshire News* (8156759). 1.40 *Film: The Unforgotten* (8591876). 2.50 *Baywatch* (8784776). 3.10 *Westcountry News* (8156759). 3.50 *Yorkshire News* (1425405). 12.05 *Film: Into Thin Air* (355852). 1.50 *Camel Knowledge* (3475500). 2.45 *Film: Gold and the Barbarians* (115210). 4.15 *Sound Bites* (3589479). 4.35-5.30am *Funny Bunker* (6543448).  
**Channel 3 North East**  
As Yorkshire except: 1.05pm *North East News* (8156759). 5.05 *North East News* (950115). 5.10-5.30am *Full Time* (3484202).  
**S4C**  
As C4 except: 10.00am *Hangar* with Mr Cooper (89800). 10.30 *Beavis and Butt-Head* (R/S) (517216). 11.30 *Flava* (R/S) (517217). 12.00 *Beavis and Butt-Head* (R/S) (517216). 1.30 *The Gelfin Show*. Guests include the Spice Girls – we, heh. Don't they ever rest? (S) (9900264). 2.05 *Ricki Lake* (R/S)(T) (8088326). 2.50 *Beavis and Butt-Head* (R/S) (517216). 3.15 *Flava* (R/S) (517217). 3.45 *Bless This House* (R/S) (98448). 4.15 *Film Night*. Janice Forsyth looks at Miles Forman's new film, *The People vs Larry Flynt* (R/S) (54516). 4.45 *The Best Specials*. The Red Hot Chili Peppers in concert (R) (968054). To 5.00am.

## Radio

### Radio 1

6.00am *David Pearce* 9.30 *Mark Goodier* 12.30 *Claire Burgess* 3.30 *Trevor Nelson* 6.30 *Danny Rampling* – *Lovegrove* Dance Party 9.00 *Radio 1 Rap Show* 12.00 *The Radio 1 Reggae Dancehall* 12.00 *Essential Mix* – DJ Sneak 4.00-6.00am *Arnie Highgate*

### Radio 2

6.00am *Mo Duta* 8.05 *Brian Matthew* 10.00 *Steve Wright* 1.00 *The Monks House Archive* 1.30 *To the Manor Born* 2.00 *Judi Sifers* 4.00 *Nick Barraclough* 5.00 *Ry Cooder* 6.00 *Comic Relief* on 2 7.00 *Schmoove and Showbiz* (R) 7.30 *The Music of Robert Sol* 9.00 *Dave Jarvis* 10.00 *The Showband Years* 12.05 *Joe McGarr* 4.00-7.00am *Mo Duta*

### Radio 3

6.15 *92.48* 6.55am *News*, *Headlines*. 7.00 *Record Review*. 9.00 *Building a Library*. 10.15 *Record Release*. 11.15 *Reviews*. 12.00 *Private Passions*. Another chance to hear Michael Berkeley talking to broadcaster and anthropologist David Attenborough. (R) 1.00 *I Was There*. Richard Fawkes returns with five more interviews that bring to life great musical events and celebrities of the past. In the first programme, cellist Alexander Koc recalls his time as the youngest member of the Philharmonia. 1.20 *News*. 1.45 *Private Passions*. Another chance to hear Michael Berkeley talking to broadcaster and anthropologist David Attenborough. (R) 2.00 *Private Passions*. Another chance to hear Michael Berkeley talking to broadcaster and anthropologist David Attenborough. (R) 2.30 *World of Music*. The Royal Academy of Music presents a programme of 16th- and 17th-century antiphonal music associated with St Mark's, Venice. 5.00 *Jack Record Requests*. 5.45 *Music Matters*. 6.30 *Live from the Met*. Cosi fan tutta. Mozart's black comedy with an unrelenting title is an intimate six-hander of partner-swapping and deception in love. Carol Verses, soprano (Florence), Susan Graham, mezzo (Donabella), Stanford Olsen, tenor (Fernando), Mark Oswald.



## Choice

Ian McEwan attempts to delineate his ideal state – where flux is permanent and, perhaps unsurprisingly, all are free to be miserable, in *Utopia and Other Destininations* (5.00pm R4). Earlier in the day, *The News Quiz* (12.25pm R4) returns to laugh off the miseries of real life.

baritone (Giuliano), Cecilia Bartoli, mezzo (Despina), Chorus and orchestra of the Metropolitan Opera/James Levine. Act 1. 8.10 *The James Naughtie Interview*. James Naughtie talks to this evening's *Despina*, mezzo Susan Graham. 8.40 *Così fan tutte*. Act 2. 10.20 *Best Words*. Tonight, an interview with poet and translator Elaine Feinstein, and Helen Dunmore reassesses DH Lawrence's love poetry. 10.50 *Impressions*. Alyn Shipton talks to New Yorker David Shea about his compositions, which combine sampling and improvisation. For a specially recorded session, Shea is joined by Scanner (Robin Rimbaud) and by tuba player Oren Marshall. 12.30 *First Class*. Bass player Ray Brown talks to Alyn Shipton. (R) 1.00-7.00am *Through the Night*.

**Radio 4**  
6.55am *News*. 7.00 *News*. 7.10 *News*. 7.20 *News*. 7.30 *News*. 7.40 *News*. 7.50 *News*. 8.00 *News*. 8.10 *News*. 8.20 *News*. 8.30 *News*. 8.40 *News*. 8.50 *News*. 9.00 *News*. 9.10 *News*. 9.20 *News*. 9.30 *News*. 9.40 *News*. 9.50 *News*. 10.00 *News*. 10.10 *News*. 10.20 *News*. 10.30 *News*. 10.40 *News*. 10.50 *News*. 11.00 *News*. 11.10 *News*. 11.20 *News*. 11.30 *News*. 11.40 *News*. 11.50 *News*. 12.00 *News*. 12.10 *News*. 12.20 *News*. 12.30 *News*. 12.40 *News*. 12.50 *News*. 1.00 *News*. 1.10 *News*. 1.20 *News*. 1.30 *News*. 1.40 *News*. 1.50 *News*. 2.00 *News*. 2.10 *News*. 2.20 *News*. 2.30 *News*. 2.40 *News*. 2.50 *News*. 3.00 *News*. 3.10 *News*. 3.20 *News*. 3.30 *News*. 3.40 *News*. 3.50 *News*. 4.00 *News*. 4.10 *News*. 4.20 *News*. 4.30 *News*. 4.40 *News*. 4.50 *News*. 5.00 *News*. 5.10 *News*. 5.20 *News*. 5.30 *News*. 5.40 *News*. 5.50 *News*. 6.00 *News*. 6.10 *News*. 6.20 *News*. 6.30 *News*. 6.40 *News*. 6.50 *News*. 7.00 *News*. 7.10 *News*. 7.20 *News*. 7.30 *News*. 7.40 *News*. 7.50 *News*. 8.00 *News*. 8.10 *News*. 8.20 *News*. 8.30 *News*. 8.40 *News*. 8.50 *News*. 9.00 *News*. 9.10 *News*. 9.20 *News*. 9.30 *News*. 9.40 *News*. 9.50 *News*. 10.00 *News*. 10.10 *News*. 10.20 *News*. 10.30 *News*. 10.40 *News*. 10.50 *News*. 11.00 *News*. 11.10 *News*. 11.20 *News*. 11.30 *News*. 11.40 *News*. 11.50 *News*. 12.00 *News*. 12.10 *News*. 12.20 *News*. 12.30 *News*. 12.40 *News*. 12.50 *News*. 1.00 *News*. 1.10 *News*. 1.20 *News*. 1.30 *News*. 1.40 *News*. 1.50 *News*. 2.00 *News*. 2.10 *News*. 2.20 *News*. 2.30 *News*. 2.40 *News*. 2.50 *News*. 3.00 *News*. 3.10 *News*. 3.20 *News*. 3.30 *News*. 3.40 *News*. 3.50 *News*. 4.00 *News*. 4.10 *News*. 4.20 *News*. 4.30 *News*. 4.40 *News*. 4.50 *News*. 5.00 *News*. 5.10 *News*. 5.20 *News</*